

whose hands the destinies of our Southland lie, for love of her I break my silence, to speak to you a few words of respectful admonition. The past is dead; let it bury its dead, its hopes and its aspirations. Before you lies the future—a future full of golden promise, a future full of recompense

for honorable endeavor, a future of expanding national glory, before which all the world shall stand amazed. Let me beseech you to lay aside all rancor, all bitter sectional feeling, and to take your places in the ranks of those who will bring about a consummation devoutly to be wished—a reunited country.

## A COLLEGE THAT PIONEERED

OBERLIN: 1833-1908

BY WILLIAM B. SHAW

**A**N old man stood in the dooryard of his California home, some years ago, and sketched the story of his life. One of our Western empire-builders, he had played his part, not without adventure, in the drama of expansion and exploration. Twice he had led a wagon train across the plains before a transcontinental railway was more than a dream. More than one rude frontier community owed to him a stimulus to decent living. A man of exceptional bodily and mental vigor, he had used his powers to make the world about him better. Knowing these facts, I was interested in his personal explanation. Before he had gone very far in the narrative it became clear that one dominant influence had virtually shaped his career. He had been a student at Oberlin in the days of Finney and Mahan, and the impulse that came to his youthful spirit from the Oberlin teachings of the '30s accounted very largely for all that he had done in the half-century of active life that followed. If I could repeat to you the story that the old man told to me, you would have the secret of Oberlin's early growth; for it was by molding and inspiring hundreds of such lives in the three decades preceding the Civil War that Oberlin helped to make a nation's history as well as her own. Of the 36,000 men and women who in the past seventy-five years have had some part in the Oberlin microcosm, there have probably been few indeed who have not received from their contact with the institution certain definite impressions that have more or less modified all their later lives. The Oberlin influence was

always a positive, even an aggressive, influence, and, whether we fully sympathize with it or not, we must admit both its persistence and its inherent virility.

The founders of Oberlin had something more in mind than to organize a college, or, in the phrasing of those times, "a seminary of learning." They wished to plant a colony in the Ohio forests and to dedicate it to righteousness. The humanitarian impulse was strong in their undertaking. They gave to their enterprise the name of a man whom no American, so far as one knows, had ever seen—a humble Alsatian pastor, whose work in a remote village of the Vosges Mountains, foreshadowing in some respects the "institutional church" of later times, had been brought to the attention of the famous Unitarian clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Henry Ware, Jr. The sketch of Jean Frédéric Oberlin which Dr. Ware published and circulated in America made a distinct impression on the imaginations of two Presbyterian missionary preachers in northern Ohio—John J. Shipperd and Philo P. Stewart. What Pastor Oberlin had been able to do for his mountain hamlet in the Vosges they hoped to do for the wilderness of northern Ohio—and, more than that, they looked forward to the rapid peopling of the Mississippi Valley and were eager to influence the life that should be developed in that great domain. The fathers of the Oberlin idea, like the gentle pastor whose life they wished to emulate, were men of peace, but in the working out of their scheme conditions were soon encountered which made this modest

Ohio settlement a storm center of controversy for years to come.

It was in 1833, when Andrew Jackson was entering on his second term in the White House, that plans for the opening of "Oberlin Collegiate Institute" were matured and put in effect. The two men who took the initiative in founding the community and the school were not profound scholars. It is not to be assumed that they had any very clear conception of the scholastic needs of their generation. The one definite purpose of the school in their minds was the training of godly leaders, in the ministry and out of it, to advance the cause of Christianity in the West. Years afterwards it was said, with a sneer, that the Oberlin idea of a college was "a big country school with a revival going on in it." There was an element of truth in the fling. Yet if one should infer from the nature of Oberlin's origins that scholarship there, even in the early days, was grossly inferior or out of touch with what was going on in the world, he would be seriously in error. Almost from the beginning the men who came to Oberlin to teach were scholars of no mean attainments. Graduates of Yale, Dartmouth, Williams, and Amherst—honor men in more than one instance—they were proud to bear the torch of learning over the crest of the Alleghenies and to keep its light steadily burning through many troublous years. It can be truly said that for three-quarters of a century Oberlin has stood for an honest and genuine scholarship as opposed to every form of educational sham, and this has not been the least of her services to the West and to the Nation.

The dominant purpose of the founders, as I have stated, was to create a center of evangelization, but it was impossible, even if they had desired, to keep the craft that they had launched out of the main current of social and political agitation. All of those who had anything to do with directing the early life of Oberlin were men of strong convictions. Before many months had passed, the slavery question began to be debated in the village. Within two years the trustees had committed the institution to the admission of colored students

on equal terms with white—a position from which no retreat was ever attempted. Under the strict alignment of that era the Oberlin leaders were labeled "Abolitionists," the school soon became known as a hotbed of "Abolition" sentiment, and the very name of the peace-loving Alsatian pastor came to stand for a cause that was as bitterly opposed by one section of the Union as it was courageously upheld by a small but growing minority in another section. The sweep of events, unforeseen at the outset, had made this little group of pious school-teachers in the Ohio backwoods the ordained champions of a hated sentiment and a despised race. Oberlin was now fairly enlisted for a Thirty Years' War that might well try the mettle of any struggling pioneer college.

In this crisis of 1835 there were two important factors that compelled Oberlin's open adherence to the anti-slavery cause. One was the "rebellion" in Lane Seminary, the Presbyterian divinity school at Cincinnati, caused by the attempt of the trustees to forbid discussion of the slavery question by the students. The other was the acceptance of a professorship of theology at Oberlin by Charles G. Finney, the evangelist, on condition that the institution should be open to colored students, and that the trustees should leave all matters of internal administration to the faculty. By their action on the color question the Oberlin trustees secured the immediate accession of Lane Seminary students who left that institution on account of their anti-slavery principles, while the Rev. Asa Mahan, of Cincinnati, who had been a Lane trustee, became Oberlin's first President. At the same time, the financial support of influential friends of Mr. Finney in New York, where he was then the pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle, was obtained.

Without knowing something of Charles G. Finney's unique personality, we lack the real key to Oberlin's history; yet there has probably never been printed a pen-portrait of that personality which would seem to those who knew the man to be adequate or true. The most powerful preacher of his time, a theologian of marked ability, Finney had never

received even the liberal education of that day. Yet he had a legal training, and of a direct and rugged English suited to the appeals of the evangelist he was a master. A man of genuine and terrible earnestness, before which men bowed like grain before the wind, this prophet, whom at first the churches had rejected, now commanded the wealth of merchant princes. When he went from New York to Oberlin, there to pass the remaining half of his long life, he brought to the new school in the forest, not only a National reputation as a religious teacher, but also a promise of generous financial support for the venture. Then came the panic of 1837, sweeping away the fortunes of those New York merchants who had pledged their aid, and out of the wreck the only visible token that survived at Oberlin was Tappan Hall, whose red-brick walls stood for half a century on the campus as a memorial of the sturdy anti-slavery merchant who had "silks for sale, but not his principles." Finney succeeded Mahan in the presidency; but that was a mere incident. He had put his stamp upon the school long before he became its President.

Meanwhile, the coming of the Lane Seminary "rebels" from Cincinnati made possible the graduation of a class in theology before the first class in the department of liberal arts was ready to receive the bachelor's degree. From that day to this theology has been a great feature in the Oberlin educational scheme. In the early years the Oberlin teachings were denounced as heretical by orthodox Protestant bodies, and licenses to preach were refused to graduates of the Seminary. The chief ground of complaint was the alleged teaching of "antinomian perfectionism." The opposition died out in the course of time, and the Seminary has sent out hundreds of ordained ministers, most of whom have occupied pulpits in Congregational churches, East and West. The Finney spirit was the spirit of the evangelist, and it never faltered.

The time of Oberlin's beginnings was a period in our National history when "isms" of every sort flourished as never before or since. In the intensity of

early Oberlin radicalism many untried beliefs were emphasized, and some theories were found wanting when put to the test of practice. It was intended, for example, that the institution should be a manual-labor school—an idea evolved not so much from any theory of pedagogics as from the pressing economic necessities of the times. The experiment failed signally, and was never repeated, although to this day the College seal bears the words, "Learning and Labor." The vegetarians and other dietary reformers had their day at Oberlin, as elsewhere. Those in authority took a firm stand, from the very beginning, against the use of liquor and tobacco. There was also a determined opposition to secret societies of every sort. Most of the current social and ethical reforms were advocated at Oberlin, although not always in an extreme form; but the immediate effect was to spread abroad the reputation of the community as a gathering-place for "come-outers" of every type. To be associated with Oberlin, in those days, was to bear the brand of fanaticism, whether social, political, or religious.

Of all the experiments made in that era of innovation, the one that has had the greatest permanent significance, that has distinctly impressed itself on the life of the institution and has constituted Oberlin's chief contribution to America's intellectual progress, was the admission of women to the advantages of the higher education. The three young women upon whom the degree of A.B. was conferred at Oberlin in 1841, on the completion of the regular four years' course, were the first of their sex in America to have the privilege of earning such a degree. Since that date the policy of co-education of the sexes has been adopted by all the State universities of the West and the Middle West, by Cornell, Chicago, and Stanford, and by most of the smaller colleges founded after Oberlin had led the way. Whatever may be thought of the wisdom of that policy—and on that question the doctors still disagree—there can be no doubt as to the value of Oberlin's practical demonstration that women could do college work. Woman's higher education

throughout the world, in the women's colleges as well as in co-educational institutions, owes much to the fact that seventy years ago a way was found by this pioneer college of the American backwoods to give the American girl of that day the same educational privileges that her brother had. At that time and for many years thereafter the Western girl who wished to take a college course and do full college work was restricted to Oberlin and to schools of the Oberlin type. The women's colleges of the East belong to a later development, although Mount Holyoke had made a brave beginning.

Of the thirty-two women who received the degree of A.B. at Oberlin in the decade of 1841-50, eight were living in 1905, when the quinquennial catalogue of the College was issued (in the case of two members of the class of 1844, sixty-one years since graduation), and of the twenty-four who had died eight had lived more than fifty years after graduation and eight between forty and fifty years. All but one of the thirty-two had been married. Every one of these women had done practically the same college work that Yale graduates of the same period had done; for the curricula of Yale and Oberlin in those days were almost identical.

In National affairs, as the Civil War clouds gathered, Oberlin stood out more clearly than ever as the representative of a body of public opinion in the Northern States that was not to be ignored. Perhaps no American college, in the twenty years preceding the war, was more closely in touch with popular movements. Even in those years the Oberlin constituency was Nation-wide. On the slavery question, the opening of the College doors to negro students was but the beginning of a campaign for the education of public sentiment that ended only when Lincoln's pen had made the slaves free. Every student who came to the College was certain to hear the cause of the slave pleaded from the Oberlin platform by the ablest of anti-slavery orators and agitators. Nine out of ten of the students went out from the College halls to be agitators themselves, each in his own way. It was in those days that the

schoolmaster was abroad in the land, and hundreds of country schools throughout Ohio, and in other States, were taught by anti-slavery apostles from Oberlin, who had their long vacation from college in winter, instead of summer, for this very purpose. Five hundred of these teachers went out from the student body in a single year. Such a propaganda could not be conducted year after year without achieving some result. There came a time when a few votes were needed in each of the States of the old Northwest to throw the weight of those States against the slave power in the National councils. It has been asserted, not without a show of reason, that the influence of those Oberlin pedagogues, out of all proportion to their numbers, turned the scale. At any rate, this unique and persistent campaign of the schoolmasters had no small part in bringing about the election of Lincoln.

On the whole, perhaps Oberlin hardly deserved her reputation for extreme radicalism. True, the village was a station on the "Underground Railroad" to Canada, and citizens were implicated in rescues of alleged fugitive slaves, one such having been harbored and fed by Professor Fairchild himself. Yet such practices were common enough in other Northern communities. The general tenor of the Oberlin teachings tended to inculcate obedience to the laws of the land. When at last Fort Sumter fell, the students went to the front in such numbers that the class-rooms, even of the divinity professors, were almost deserted. One hundred of Oberlin's sons gave up their lives on the battlefield. Some of her graduates, like General J. D. Cox, took part in the most important operations of the war. A few of the older Eastern colleges had greater numbers of alumni and students to offer for the Nation's service, but none made greater sacrifices.

Through all her history Oberlin has never ceased to be stirred by the evangelistic impulse. In the early days, when her anti-slavery attitude prevented full co-operation with the American Board, her graduates founded independent missions in foreign lands and in parts of our own land (like Oregon in the '30s

and '40s) that were quite as difficult of access as any part of Africa to-day. In course of time nearly every State of the Middle West and Northwest had its little college—each a junior Oberlin, and each dependent to a great extent on the parent school for its faculty and its standards. Oberlin men and women pioneered everywhere. There is hardly a Western school board or State legislature or city council that has not felt their influence. They have always sought the frontiers of civilization, whether at home or abroad. The members of Oberlin's China Band who died martyrs' deaths at Shansi in the Boxer Rebellion were succeeded within two years by a new band of enthusiastic recruits, whose ambition it is to give that part of China a school system that will truly enlighten the people and win them for Christian civilization. Among the students now in college there is no lack of volunteers for this work. Indeed, it is said that in no other American college or university, East or West, does the modern missionary enterprise find so hearty a response from the student body.

The returning "old grad," or other curious visitor, during Commencement week this year will find three or four thousand of Oberlin's sons and daughters assembled from every part of America, with not a few from distant lands, to celebrate the completion of the third quarter-century in the history of the colony and the College. As he steps from the Pullman on the Lake Shore train there will be little to remind him of the clearing in the woods that "Fathers" Shipherd and Stewart christened in 1833 with a name that devoted men and women have been proud to carry to the ends of the earth. The Oberlin of to-day is a model American village, in which sanitation and water supply are counted important assets. The college buildings—several of them built of stone and architecturally beautiful as well as convenient in design—are grouped about old Tappan Square. One of the most imposing of the buildings houses the Conservatory of Music, which, in respect to standards of instruction and strength of faculty and equipment, ranks with the first two or three schools of its kind in America.

The Finney Memorial Chapel and the Carnegie Library are to be dedicated during the anniversary week. The students of the College, the Conservatory, the Theological Seminary, and the Academy—1,852 of them, all told—live all over the village. For the men there is no dormitory system, and the four dormitory buildings provided for the women can shelter only a small proportion of the female students in the several departments of the institution.

Even the "old grad" may be surprised to learn that these young people come from practically every State and Territory of the Union, from our insular dependencies, and from distant foreign countries; that less than half of them are residents of the State of Ohio; that, in short, Oberlin's constituency has become more truly *national* than that of any other college or university west of the Alleghanies, with the possible exception of the University of Michigan, and that it shares with a small group of Eastern universities the distinction of drawing more students from without its own State boundaries than from within them. The "old grad" further learns that 109 of the current year's enrollment come from Pennsylvania, 108 from New York, 102 from Illinois, 86 from Michigan, and 72 from Iowa, and he begins to think that no college more than Oberlin deserves to be entitled "the Yale of the West."

Outwardly, save for the presence of women in the class-rooms, the college life differs in no very marked way from that of the "plain college" in New England. There is the same interest in athletics (untainted by professionalism), and other student competitions afford an outlet for surplus undergraduate energy. The College is associated in the Northern Oratorical League with the State Universities of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa, and the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. In the intercollegiate contest of this league for the current year Oberlin's representative took first honors.

In endowment and material equipment the College is rapidly overtaking other institutions of its class. During the past ten years the general endowment has more than doubled, and is now nearing

the \$2,000,000 mark. In this period also valuable buildings have been added to the College "plant," and the enrollment of students in the College proper has increased nearly 100 per cent. The faculty is still wretchedly underpaid, but as wealth increases among the alumni the hope is entertained that the needs in this direction also will be seen and met.

In the seventy-five years of her existence Oberlin has had six presidents. The immediate successor of President Finney was James H. Fairchild (1866-89), a graduate of the second college class (1838), and an instructor and professor since graduation. President Fairchild's was a quiet but wise and fruitful administration. At his death, in 1902, he had been connected with the College, in one capacity or another, for sixty-eight years. The next two presidents, William G. Ballantine and John H. Barrows, although not Oberlin graduates, were both in fullest sympathy with the Oberlin ideals. President Barrows died just as some of his zealous labors for the

College were beginning to have results. His successor, Henry Churchill King, a graduate of the class of 1879, has the loyal support of the alumni, and in the first five years of his administration the College has well maintained the remarkable rate of growth that began under Dr. Barrows. President King, like President Fairchild, literally grew up in the College, except for several years of post-graduate study at Harvard and Berlin. His books have given him a high rank among the constructive theologians of the day,<sup>1</sup> and his administrative abilities had been proven even before his election to the presidency, by his years of service as Dean and acting President.

Oberlin is no longer isolated. She is reached by the great world-currents of modern progress in art and science and constructive thought. She could not, if she would, remain what her founders planned her to be; but her long tutelage of "plain living and high thinking" is not to be despised in this day of material affluence.

## LETTERS OF A VAGABOND

BY ALBERT EDWARDES

### SECOND PAPER

Les Andelys, Department of Eure, France,  
July, 1907.

**I**SN'T the name of this place a symphony like one of Rossetti's angels in "The Blessed Damozel"?

How did I get here? Well, I ran across an old college friend in Paris—chap with the vagrant in him and Norman French ancestors. And he proposed walking through Normandic. As tramping takes less money than anything I know, we rambled off. This is our last day. At noon we take train for Rouen, he goes back to his law office at home and I back to Paris and work.

We looked over the map for a place to end our walk. Viroflay—Rolleboise—Veronet; half a dozen names attracted us. But Les Andelys, thank God, won out, and here it is. Yesterday noon we left the highroad with its string of automobiles and vile dust and struck out

over the hills through an ancient forest where Richard Cœur de Lion used to go hawking, and where many a knight went a-grailing in even older days. And all of a sudden, just as the sun was softening, we came to the edge of the forest and of the hill at the same time, and there was spread out the valley with the two little clusters of Norman cottages, Le Grand Andely and Le Petit Andely. There is a fine old church overlooking Grand Andely. They, the village folk, started it for the glory of God in ten hundred and something. Roland du Val, Sieur de Les Andelys (so an old inscription says), left forest lands and meadows to the Church when he went with his men to win glory for Richard, Duke of Normandy and King of England, in the Holy Land. And there a

<sup>1</sup> See article by Washington Gladden, *The Outlook* for January 26, 1907.