

# ADDRESSES

DELIVERED UPON THE OCCASION

OF

**THE OPENING**

OF

# THE FREE ACADEMY,

JANUARY 27, 1849.

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PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY AND COUNTY  
OF NEW-YORK.

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New-York :

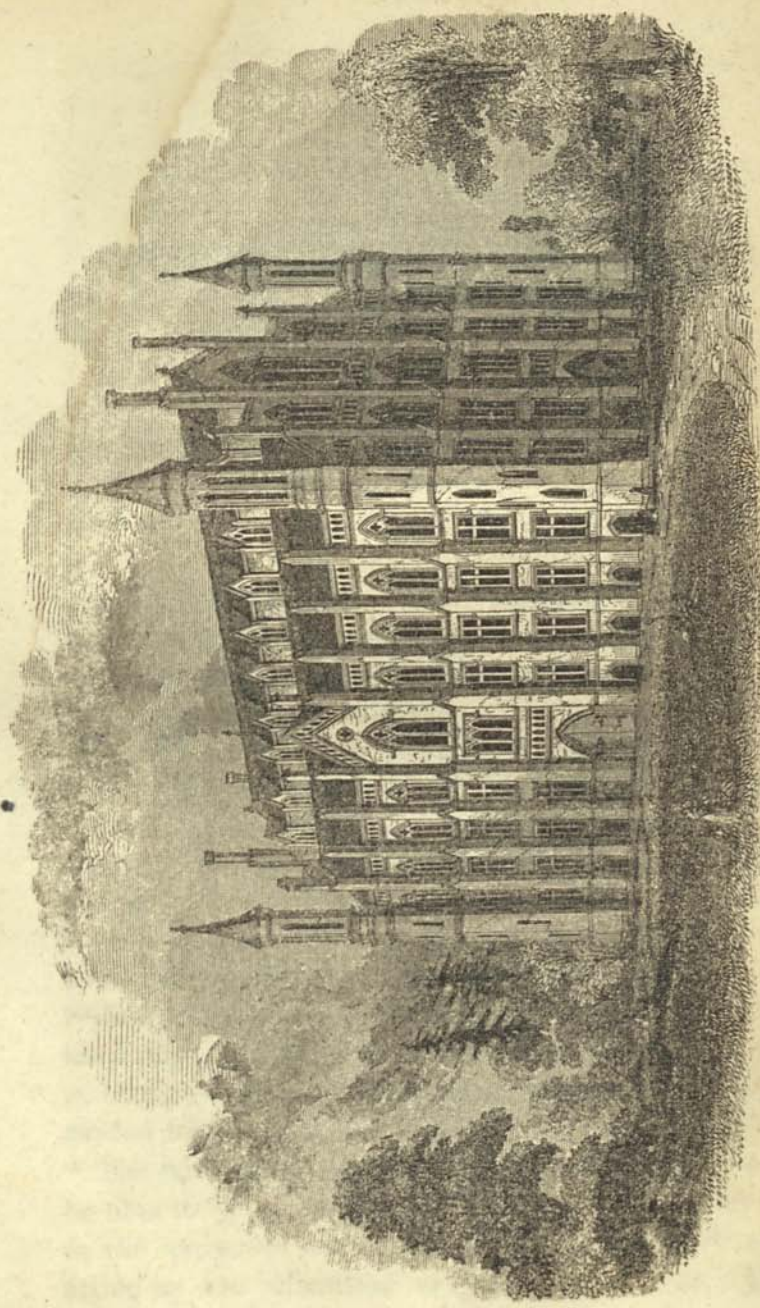
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1849.

ORDER OF EXERCISES  
UPON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING  
OF  
**THE FREE ACADEMY.**

JANUARY 27, 1849.

1. MUSIC.
2. PRAYER, by Rev. Edward Dunlap Smith.
3. ADDRESS, by Robert Kelly, Esq., President of the Board of Education.
4. MUSIC.
5. ADDRESS, by Horace Webster, LL. D., Principal of the Free Academy.
6. ADDRESS, by Hon. Wm. F. Havemeyer, Mayor of the City of New-York.
7. MUSIC.
8. BENEDICTION, by Rev. George Peck, D



ANDREW BRADY, MASON. JAMES RENWICK, JR., ARCHITECT. E. F. ROGERS, CARPENTER.



## ADDRESS OF ROBERT KELLY, ESQ.,

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

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FELLOW CITIZENS,

WE have invited your presence on this occasion, to lend us your countenance on the opening of the Free Academy, and to introduce the Professors recently appointed, upon their responsible and honorable employment. We desire, also, to afford to the public the opportunity of seeing the arrangements that have been made for the accommodation of scholars, and for carrying on the business of instruction. It is an occasion in which we have all a common, and an equal, interest. This institution belongs to the people—its doors are open for the admission of their children—its courses of instruction are to be arranged to suit their wants—it will derive its support from them, and be managed by officers elected by them. We wish, as representatives of the people, to show you what we have done, and express the hopes we cherish, that the institution may prove worthy of the City, and be regarded by you as one of its greatest ornaments.

The building is open for your inspection. You will be able to judge of its convenience, and adaptedness to the purposes contemplated. The furniture and fitting up are submitted to your examination. You

will decide if they have been provided with discretion, and in a style befitting the Free Academy of the City of New York.

The dimensions of the building are 125 feet by 80. It consists, exclusive of the basement and great hall, of three spacious stories, which are intersected by two wide passages, running at right angles through the middle of the building. It is believed, that it will afford accommodation for a thousand scholars, with the necessary appliances and conveniences.

It has been erected under the superintendence of James Renwick, jr., Architect. It is in the style of the Gothic town-halls of the Netherlands. The style was selected for its appropriateness and convenience. By it, we have been enabled to combine utility with appearance, obtaining convenient means of ventilation and heating, and converting flues into buttresses, and chimnies into towers. This elegant Hall, so well adapted to the purposes of the institution, may be said to have been procured without cost. There is no waste room—the building is brought into use up to the very roof-peak, and the structure for the support of the roof is so arranged, that the weight rests mainly upon the interior walls, and there is no lateral thrust upon the outer walls. This has allowed the construction of well-tied, hollow, light, exterior walls, at a saving in cost sufficient to pay for all the ornament, which the adoption of the Gothic style of architecture has required. An ornamental building has thus been obtained, perhaps at less cost than a plain edifice, of proper architectural proportions, arrangement, and solidity, could have been erected for.

The entire cost of erection, in which are embraced



all expenses of printing and advertising, plans and superintendence; and including several large items of expenditure, for foundation and sewers, not contemplated when the contracts were made; also, the stuccoing of the exterior, and painting and sanding of the battlements and pinnacles, to be performed next summer, will be safely within the sum of \$50,000, the amount authorized by law. It is hoped, that nothing will be required beyond the amount already appropriated, \$48,000. The Legislature wisely limited the cost of erecting the building, in view of the extravagance which is usually practised in this particular.

This eligible site, of the dimensions of 122½ feet on Lexington Avenue, by 200 feet on 23d street, was purchased at a cost of \$25,000. The amount appropriated thus far, for fitting up and furniture, is \$10,000.

The history of this project can be told in a few words. The Board of Education took the first action in reference to it, by the adoption of a resolution, introduced by Commissioner Townsend Harris, July 27th, 1846, raising a Committee to report upon the subject. January 20th, 1847, a report was presented by Messrs. Harris and J. S. Bosworth, of said Committee. February 10th, 1847, the report was considered, and a Committee appointed to memorialize the Legislature, consisting of the same gentlemen, with Commissioner J. L. Mason. May 7th, 1847, the Act was passed, under which the institution is established, with the provision, that the question should be submitted to the people, at the ensuing school and judicial election. The election occurred on the first Monday of June, 1847, and the result of the vote was, 19,404 in favor of establishing the Free Academy, to 3,409

against it—giving the enormous majority of 15,995. The excavation for the foundation of this edifice was commenced in the end of November, 1847. January 15th, 1849, the institution was opened for the examination of pupils. January 27th, 1849, we are met to exchange congratulations.

† The establishment of this institution is an interesting circumstance, as connected with the subject of public education. It is an important step forward, in this great cause. Our system of public education has been confined, hitherto, to Common School instruction. Something has been done for the advancement of higher education, in existing institutions, not strictly of a public character. The academies and colleges throughout the State have been aided by Legislative appropriations, and they have thus been enabled to extend their usefulness, and bring the means of education they afford within the reach of a larger number, than would have been practicable otherwise. But this is the first attempt that has been made in our State, to introduce academic or collegiate instruction, as a part of the system of popular education. A narrow view of the subject might lead some to suppose, that, inasmuch as the main purpose of a public system of education is to elevate the mass of the population, all the means which can be controlled for educational purposes should be confined to the support of common schools, and that any sums, applied to the aid of higher seminaries of learning, are so much diverted and abstracted from that object. But those who have examined the subject most carefully, unite in the opinion, that there is an intimate connection between the general education of the whole population, and the diffusion, to some



extent, throughout society, of higher and more extended culture. The larger the proportion of well-educated, intelligent men, there is in a *free* community, the wider, as a general rule, will be the diffusion of popular education; the more will its want be felt by those whom it is to benefit, and the more will it receive of effort on the part of those who guide public opinion. The effect of such institutions, as this one, upon the cause of general education, will be peculiarly happy, in the influence that will be exerted by the graduates, all of whom will have received the solid basis of their education in the common schools.

The close connection between the Free Academy and the Common Schools, is an important circumstance in its influence on popular education, and will, it is hoped, be productive of immense advantage. Being established as a part of the system of public education, the Free Academy is, necessarily, united with the Common Schools. The Act gives the Board of Education power to establish a Free Academy "for the purpose of extending the benefits of education gratuitously to those who have been pupils in the Common Schools of the City and County of New York." The qualification for admission into the former is, a thorough knowledge of the branches taught in the latter. The education is continued onward, branching, as it proceeds, towards the various divisions of the field of knowledge, as the purpose of the pupils may lead them. Together, they are to form—for most youth—a complete education. It should be the effort of all concerned, to make it so complete and so valuable, that it will be sought by all classes of the community, as the best that can be obtained. All will then receive



the benefits of the education provided at the common cost, and will feel a united interest in the welfare and best management of the entire system. The standard of instruction in the Common Schools may be gradually advanced, and the teachers will occupy, more fully and prominently, the position which their ability and general intelligence qualify them to occupy. They will have an important part to perform in the accomplishment of this grand purpose.

The reciprocal action of the Academy and the schools will be highly advantageous to both. It is on the mental discipline, imparted in the Common Schools, that much of the success of the Free Academy will depend. And it will benefit them, by the introduction of greater uniformity, by exhibiting in immediate comparison the skill of the teachers, as evidenced in the preparation of the candidates they will furnish for entrance into the Academy; by raising up from among the people a body of teachers, to recruit their ranks and increase their numbers, and by the incitements it will constantly present to the industry of the scholars. If these advantages should result from this Free Academy, it will have accomplished a public good, that will be a full equivalent for the cost of its establishment and support.

But there are other public benefits which it will render, if properly and successfully managed. It will take the children of the people, and send them out into life, endowed with such eminent advantages of education, that they will be a blessing to society, adorning their varied pursuits with their intelligence, enriching them with their discoveries, elevating and equalizing the rank and respectability of their widely

different occupations, making industry honorable, and securing to labor its proper dignity. It will bring out genius, that, otherwise, might be lost for ever. It will pick up, perhaps out of the very kennels of the city, many a gem of priceless value, and will polish it, and set it on high, that it may shed its lustre upon the world.

The advantages of this institution, as its name imports, are free to all. It presents, to rich and poor alike, an open and an even field. Intellect, industry, and good conduct, are to win the prizes on this course. Merit is to be the test of admission, and hereafter, when the number to be admitted at each examination shall be limited in advance, it will be necessary to exercise the nicest discrimination. The examinations are to be conducted, as that now progressing has been, so that there may be no ground for the suspicion of favoritism. Each candidate receives from the Principal a number, which is his only designation, until the examination is completed. The Professors who conduct the examination, are not to know the parentage, the school, or even the names of the candidates, until the whole result is declared.

The whole system of instruction that will be embraced in the plan of the Free Academy, is not definitively arranged. It has appeared best, in the judgment of the Board of Education, to put the institution into operation, to observe its working, and to learn more intimately the wants of the pupils, before determining the relative importance that shall be given to particular studies, and the extent to which they shall be carried. Under the Act authorising the establishment of the institution, they are left free to exercise their discretion



as to all these arrangements. They have, however, in their memorial to the Legislature, and in their own proceedings, sufficiently indicated its general purpose, and given repeated assurances, that ample means of education will be provided, of a very high value, thorough and diversified.

The form which the institution will necessarily take, in order that it may not be of partial benefit, will be intermediate between the college system and that of the polytechnic schools of Europe. It will embrace portions of both these systems, imbuing its course of classical and liberal education with something of a practical spirit, and uniting its courses of business, mechanical and industrial education, with general mental culture, aiming, in each case, to impart a knowledge of principles, and teaching thoroughly the science as well as its adaptations. It may not take any exclusive direction. As it belongs to the people, its plan, direction, and management, must be for the benefit of the whole.

It cannot, therefore, occupy the situation of a preparatory seminary to any existing institution. If there should be founded hereafter a great university, equal, in all respects, to the great universities of Europe, or should any of our collegiate institutions expand into those dimensions, to such an institution only could the Free Academy serve as a preparatory, with many other sister academies scattered over the land. And, inasmuch as it does not occupy precisely the same field, it ought not to be regarded as antagonistic to any other institution. It will, unless the hopes of its friends shall be disappointed, diffuse widely over society the blessings of knowledge, and will largely increase in the



community the number of ripe scholars and highly educated men. But the effect of this spread of liberal cultivation will only be, to make it more desired and sought after, in all the various seminaries of learning where it is furnished.

Fellow-citizens, this institution has already received the strongest evidences of the favor of the whole community, in the large majority which ratified the law, authorising its establishment. It will require their continued favor and support, that it may attain, and maintain, the position which it aims to occupy. Public confidence will be the only safeguard of the Free Academy. May it always receive that confidence, and ever reward it, by the great good it will perform !

The institution has been organised, for the commencement of operations, by the appointment of the following corps of instructors :

HORACE WEBSTER, L.L.D., *Principal.*

EDWARD C. ROSS, *Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.*

GERARDUS B. DOCHARTY, *Assistant Professor do. do.*

THEODORE IRVING, *Professor of History and Belles Lettres.*

JOHN J. OWEN, D.D., *Professor of the Latin and Greek Languages and Literature.*

OLIVER W. GIBBS, *Professor of Chemistry.*

JOHN ROEMER, *Professor of the French Language.*

AGUSTIN J. MORALES, *Professor of the Spanish Language.*

THEODORE GLAUBENSKLEE, *Professor of the German Language and Literature.*

PAUL P. DUGGAN, *Professor of Drawing.*

I have now the honor of presenting them to this audience, as the first faculty of the Free Academy.

MR. PRINCIPAL AND GENTLEMEN, PROFESSORS AND  
TEACHERS OF THE FREE ACADEMY :

This public occasion of opening the Free Academy, affords me the opportunity of offering some observations as to the nature of your duties, and the circumstances of your position. It seems appropriate, at this time, to give expression to the expectations, formed by the Board of Education, as they relate to the institution they have established, and to those whom they have appointed its first officers, and to present some thoughts as to the peculiar character of this seminary of learning, and the responsibility of those into whose hands the important trust is now confided. It is a subject deeply interesting to you, and one which, I have no doubt, has been the occasion to you of much serious reflection.

It is, in every aspect, a most interesting field of labor. You will have a large body of mind on which to operate, and that of superior quality. The best scholars of the Common Schools are to be your pupils. They will not be received in an imperfect state of preparation, with the view that they may make it up hereafter. There is no occasion to show leniency on this point, from the fear of losing the favor of parents, or suffering a diminution of income. They will come, too, with the disposition to make the best use of the means of instruction. It is by diligence that they have become the premium pupils of the Common Schools. By the same diligence, they will maintain themselves here. They do not come merely for the respectability of a certain sort of education, to pass through a routine with as little of application as will serve the purpose, and then receive a title of graduation. But they come



here, because they value the education, and want it to qualify them for usefulness hereafter.

The *free* characteristic of the Academy, will give you a great advantage over the whole subject of discipline, both as to the preservation of order, and the entire conduct of the business of instruction. You will, without fear and without favor, so control the progress and gradation of each and all, that your training will be the most efficient possible, and may be all effective. You will promote no student to an advanced branch of study, until the preliminary degrees have been mastered. By pursuing this course, you will not waste, as is too often the case, both his time and yours. There will be no retardation of those prepared to advance. You will keep the column marching on—a band of picked men—with which no idlers can keep pace. You will not wait for halters and stragglers. You will not watch the movements, and show indulgence to the unsteady progress, of erratic genius, that loves to turn aside and waste its speed, in chase of every glittering ball, or golden apple, that rolls across its path.

What an interesting thought it is, too, to the teacher, that his labors are not to be lost upon half or two-thirds of his pupils, and that the results are not merely to be seen in the refinement and cultivation of the minds of the youth, but to be felt hereafter in the world, where they are to be men of action and influence. It is an animating consideration to him, when communicating knowledge to his class, that many of them are pursuing the study for the purpose of applying it to some useful vocation, and not as a mere matter



of curious information, or a process of intellectual discipline.

With such minds to receive the lessons of truth, controlled with such effective discipline, trained under circumstances of such advantage, and stimulated by such impulses, great results should be produced.— Unquestionably, great results will be expected. It seems now to depend upon you, whether it shall not be said of the Free Academy, as Cicero once said of the school of Isocrates, in a passage where he speaks distinctly of the various fields in which the pupils of that philosopher became distinguished, and condenses his panegyric in a comparison of exquisite felicity—*“Cujus e ludo, tanquam ex equo Trojano, meri principes exierunt.”*

There is, certainly, a serious weight of responsibility resting upon the first teachers of the Free Academy. It is on them, that its success, for several years at least, will depend. And the right impulse at the outset may have a bearing upon its entire history, and exert an influence upon the whole educational system of our City and State. The disappointment of the hopes of the friends of this enterprise, on the contrary, at the commencement of the experiment, may produce unhappy consequences, of wide extent and long duration. The spirit which is to pervade the institution will be communicated by you, and you will have much to do in giving it its character and moulding its form. The Board of Education can only sketch the plan—it is for you to carry it out, and accomplish it in practice. And it is from your knowledge of the subject, and your observation and experience in the working of the institution, that they expect much light to guide them in arranging, hereafter, its complete organization.

The general character of the institution will be the result of the direction of each particular department. If its practical aim is to be realized, it is to be done only by the practical aim of each Professor, in shaping his department, and in giving his instructions. If youth are to be prepared specially for the prosecution of the useful arts, or any other industrial occupation, the Professor must give to his teaching the requisite spirit, direction, and aim—lay the scientific groundwork, and guide the minds of the students to the theoretical knowledge, necessary in each case. Everything here must depend upon the teaching, under any system, however perfect in its details.

It is not only the application of science to the arts of industry, that is to be regarded in this connection, but the whole subject of education, as a preparation for American life, is before us. Here is an opportunity offered, to introduce a system of superior education, that shall meet, in some degree, the varied wants of our busy community. Let us not sacrifice the opportunity. It cannot be, that one unvarying course of instruction furnishes the best culture for all youth. There is a disposition with many, to admire too highly, and exalt too much in dignity, studies, the aim of which seems far removed from the ordinary cares of mortals. When reflecting upon this subject, Virgil's beautiful description of the games at the tomb of Anchises has often presented itself to my mind, as affording an illustration of this somewhat general sentiment. The claims of Hippocoon, whose arrow entered the mast; of Mnestheus, who severed the string; and even of Eurytion, whose shaft pierced the dove, when soaring away in the clouds, are passed by; and, on some



principle of poetic justice, the palm is awarded to old Aestes, whose arrow took fire in its aimless flight, burning and blazing, a meteor in the sky.

“In nubibus arsit arundo,  
Signavitque viam flammis, tenuesque recessit  
Consumpta in ventos.”

If the systems, which may be presented to us as models for our imitation, originated at a different era in the world's history—if they were adopted when the field of knowledge was widely different from what it is now—if they were designed for the benefit of particular classes or professions—let us not refuse to keep pace, in the progress of education, with the progress of mankind. Education should be in keeping with the character of the age. The school should bear a close analogy to the life of the nation.

You will not regard it as ungracious, if I offer a suggestion, as to the eminent value here, of the Professorial virtues of industry and harmony. Your positions will undoubtedly require assiduous application. And in this institution, peculiar in some of its arrangements, where the machinery is to be set up, and is all untried, and will require additions hereafter, great care must be taken, that there is no jarring or collision.—In the commencement of operations, you may find it necessary to perform, to some extent, miscellaneous duty, without the sphere of your several departments, and will, no doubt, cheerfully, now and always, contribute all that may be in your power, to the success of the whole.

To redeem the pledges that have been made, as to



the quality of the instruction that will be given in the Free Academy, it will be requisite that you pursue the highest style of teaching, introducing, wherever it is advantageous, oral and lecture instruction. Your experience has taught you, that if you wish your pupils to have their minds thoroughly imbued with the principles of a subject, it must not be stowed away in masses, unbroken and undissolved; but your teaching must be the solvent that will reduce the whole, that it may crystallize afresh in their understandings. I hope you will excuse the triteness of some of these observations. It seems proper to touch, in passing, various matters which, with some of you, are things perfectly familiar and of daily practice.

You will not be led astray by the temptation of making a showy, superficial exhibition of results, but will teach thoroughly all that you undertake to teach. We need not regard the impatience of those, who will expect to see the golden harvest waving to the breeze, by the time the seed has fairly germinated. The Free Academy must earn its reputation, by the solid character of the education it will dispense, and be known by the lasting fruits it will bear for the benefit of society.

There is one subject, of great delicacy, connected with your office, to which I feel it my duty to allude. There is danger, if caution be not exercised, of wounding the religious feelings of some of the youth intrusted to your care. Our system of public education is based upon the principle of excluding all sectarian tenets, and we are trying the grand experiment of a separation of church and school—the only mode in which a free government can itself educate the people. The Free

Academy is to be conducted upon this principle, and no class of religionists is to be debarred from its advantages, by offence given to conscientious convictions. It were a breach of honor, to direct education, provided at the public cost, as a means of proselytism to any particular system of doctrinal belief. In teaching the higher branches of knowledge, there is a wide scope for the action of such influences. The teacher's own doctrinal sentiments, if his mind be not liberalized, may pervade and color his philosophical opinions, and the light through which he views the facts of history; or he may covertly insinuate statements and principles, subversive of the cherished faith of others. There are other, various, indirect influences, affecting this subject, which should be carefully watched.

But let the spirit of Christianity pervade your teaching, as it pervades the laws of the land, and the administration of justice. Let a devout Christian sentiment be the tone of morals and philosophy here.—Teach that the truths of Nature rest upon the truth of God. Demonstrate, that at the foundation of every science, lies omniscient wisdom; that all of beautiful or sublime truth is but a development of the Divine mind. Point to the limits, where man, by searching, can find out no further, because he meets the unrevealed mysteries of the Divine power. Let the serene light of a pure religion permeate every science, brightening, and blending with, its beauty and truth, like a lamp, set within a vase of alabaster, bringing out, into bolder relief and more exquisite effect, the forms and ornaments that are sculptured upon it. I trust that a spirit of Infidelity—Materialistic, Atheistic, or Pantheistic—may never gain a foothold within these walls,



to exert that incalculable power for evil which it will control, by guiding the minds of youth in their investigations in the higher regions of knowledge.

When exhibiting the scroll of the heavens, and pointing out the golden characters emblazoned upon it, you tell your scholars that those characters are the symbols of worlds; let not the guidance of a mad undevoutness lead them to the inconclusive reasoning, that because the Almighty hath created all those radiant spheres, which none but himself can number or call by their names, and for his glory sent them upon their career, whirling, like burning censers, through the sky, and binds them to his throne with cords invisible, and sustains them in their prescribed courses, not needing to check, or alter, with his hand, their intricate movements; therefore, his rebellious creatures upon this apostate orb are not subject to the moral laws, and the eternal sanctions, of his infinite government; but, let this be the spirit of your teaching—  
 “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

When the illuminated page of Grecian and Roman civilization is opened to their view, and the achievements of heroic virtue, the matchless creations of art, the splendors of genius in poetry and eloquence, fascinate their imaginations; you will open, epposite to it, another page, all black with infamy, the record of the vices of that ancient world, unilluminated by a single ray of holiness. If you march them to the promenade where the school of Aristotle met, or to the porch of knowledge where Zeno taught, or bid them sit in the



shady groves of that ancient Academy, where wisdom fell, in words sweet as those of poets, from the lips of Plato, you will conduct them, also, to the altars reared to false and unknown gods. You will waft them through the open dome of the Roman Pantheon, and station, on their pedestals, the Olympic representatives of heathen morals that once possessed it. You will show how, as the virtues of that heroic people were gradually effaced and blotted out in their sad decline, fresh gods claimed their adoration, fouller, if possible, than those of older date—monsters from the teeming Nile, and men more monstrous, from the Imperial throne.

When, beneath the varied surface of this earth, you show them those tablets of stone, on which are graven the only records of its primeval ages, let them trace on them, as on the tables of the law written upon Mount Sinai, *the finger of God*. You will teach them, that the records of God's power and the revelation of his will, the registers of an eternity past, and the chart of an eternity to come, shall one day be beautifully reconciled, in a perfect gospel harmony. You will tell them, that should voices come forth from the tomb of buried centuries, full of dark and doubtful import, they may be like the false oracles of ancient times, issuing from the earth only to beguile those who trusted in them—that should Science seem to declare, that the Jehovah, who spake by the lips and the pen of Moses, of the creation of the world and the origin of our race, is to be dethroned; they have only to wait, until, by a more potent adjuration, she be compelled to make a fuller, a clearer, and more truthful utterance—for Science, exorcised and dispossessed, shall one day sit

humbly at the foot of the cross, and the Pythoness shall become a Prophetess.

Perhaps, in the education of youth, a more important thing than the inculcation of truth, is the exclusion of all that is false. The faculties are to be so disciplined, that they will detect, and reject, error, whenever it is presented. In the rapid advance which is going on in discovery, the opening of new fields of knowledge, the extension and exploration of its ancient domains, and the bold range of inquiry into all subjects on which the human intellect can act, new, strange and dangerous forms of error are constantly rising; crude and daring schemes for reconstructing all the relations of mankind are presented; sciences, that pretend to unfold all the mysteries of the spiritual world, claim reception; and all that is old and established, settled and time-honored, is called into question. This is the penalty the age has to pay for its progress. More than ever before, do the rising generation need a sound education, to guard them against this rapid succession of false schemes and theories, fraught, as many of them are, with fearful consequences. They need a special warning against those various, and shifting and clashing, and bursting, systems of abstract speculation, which, in this age of practical life, are shrouding, in their cloudy wreaths, so vast an amount of mind, and obscuring the very language in which they seek their terminology—so like, in all respects, to their effects in an earlier age—

Ἡ ψυχὴ πεπότηται,

Καὶ λεπτολογεῖν ἤδη ζητεῖ, καὶ περὶ καπνοῦ στενολεσχεῖν,

Καὶ γυναιδιῶ γνῶμην νυξασ' ἐτέρῳ λόγῳ ἀντιλογῆσαι.



The City intrusts her sons to your care. She expects them back as good citizens. The fact, that the youth educated here are likely to exert a great influence, socially and politically, renders it highly appropriate and important, that they should be instructed in the rights and duties of freemen, and the obligations they owe to society. Ideas of order and submission to law should be carefully instilled. This institution has a glorious name—The Free Academy—and it must show itself to be an institution worthy of the land of freedom, by being a school of the purest patriotism.

Gentlemen—It is my pleasant office, in handing over to your care the institution, which is now opened under such happy auspices, to express in words, what has already been done by the act of your appointment, the confidence entertained in your ability by the Board of Education. I think, too, I may assume to be the voice of this intelligent and approving audience, in giving utterance to their united good wishes. They have assembled here on this occasion, to encourage you with their presence—to give you the greeting of many a bright smile, and to induct you into your honorable offices, with ardent hopes and prayers. May the blessing of the Almighty be with you, animate you with assiduous zeal, increase your knowledge and ability to communicate, relieve the cares with which your duties will necessarily be accompanied, impart patience, discretion and wisdom, and crown your labors with abundant success!

## ODE,

*Composed for the occasion by a Lady of New York.*

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“KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PEOPLE.”

Muses of the ancient fountain,  
 We invoke your aid to day :  
 From your old, Parnassian mountain,  
 Stoop to list our warbled lay.  
 You, another home we offer,  
 Here, within these spacious walls ;  
 To accept the friendly proffer,  
 Hark ! a People loudly calls.

Heroes of the ancient story,  
 Ye who live on memory's page,  
 Gather round us in your glory,  
 Poet, Warrior, Prophet, Sage.  
 Mighty shades of vanished races,  
 With your tongues of varying tone,  
 Fix ye here your dwelling places,  
 Let us all a kindred own.

Here, by wisdom, kindly cherished,  
 Let the lamp of science shine,  
 Souls, that else, in gloom had perished,  
 Lighting with its rays divine.  
 Music's notes and poet's numbers,  
 Pour your airy charms around ;  
 Many a spirit's dreamy slumbers,  
 Rousing by the magic sound.



Here, the golden key of learning,  
Freely, we bestow on all ;  
Youthful hearts, for knowledge burning,  
Crowd about our friendly hall.  
Learn to prize the glorious blessing,  
Offered to you in this place,  
Ye, our fondest trust possessing,  
Future hope of Freedom's race.

While before our country's altars,  
Ye, in patriot rev'rence bend ;  
Let the faith that never falters,  
All your life-long steps attend.  
Then, when human teachings over,  
You shall leave this earthly dome,  
Joyful shall your spirits hover,  
To their bright eternal home.

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Musical Exercises under the direction of Mr. George  
F. Root, assisted by a choir of ladies and gentlemen.

## ADDRESS OF HORACE WEBSTER, LL.D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE FREE ACADEMY.

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The authority of custom sanctions my occupying a portion of the time of this respected audience. I would therefore present some considerations, that I hope may not be deemed inappropriate or unimportant to the present occasion.

The FREE ACADEMY is now to go into operation. The experiment is to be tried, whether the highest education can be given to the masses; whether the children of the *people*, the children of the *whole* people, can be educated; and whether an institution of learning, of the *highest* grade, can be successfully controlled by the *popular will*; not by the privileged few, but by the privileged many.

The services of those connected with the Free Academy, have hitherto been those of preparation; and although the labor bestowed upon it has been greater and more difficult than can be readily appreciated, yet it has been only preparation, and with the expectation that there is to be prosecuted here an extended course of studies. It remains, however, for the future to decide, whether an expectation so reasonable shall be realized or not.



In reflecting upon the destiny of this institution, a crowd of most serious considerations force themselves upon the minds of us all, and upon none more so than upon those connected with it as officers; they have a most difficult duty to discharge.

If they feel properly the responsibility and importance of their position, they will endeavor not only to provide for the present exigencies, but lay broad and deep the foundation for the prosperity of the Free Academy, long after we who are now living shall have gone to multiply the dead.

The interests of education, under ordinary circumstances, can never be a matter of indifference either to the patriot or to the Christian. Education involves considerations of grave importance both to the recipient and the commonwealth of which he is a member. In this country, where all are equal in the presence of the State, it is emphatically true; here every individual is an integral part of it, and has rights and duties to perform, intimately affecting the rights and duties of others; hence the obligations of the people to see, that the commonwealth receives no harm from the neglect of the proper training of the young.

It was for a long time thought, even by men of high reputation, that it was inexpedient, that it was unwise, to educate the masses of the people; that however desirable it might be, that the leading personages of the world should be well instructed, it was best to keep the *people* ignorant, in order that they might be more tractable and obedient; but that day has long since passed by. Our noble system of Common Schools has dissipated that delusion; it is found that intelligent, educated men,

other things being equal, make the best citizens, at least, for a republic.

It is not an easy matter to define in what a complete and systematic education consists; neither is it indispensable, provided its nature be correctly understood; however, it must vary somewhat in its *details*, from the nature and exigencies of individual instances.

We have high authority for saying, "that a complete and generous education is that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war."

Education, therefore, embraces the whole of life, and all its relations to the present and the future; its elements consist in the proper cultivation and discipline of the physical, the intellectual, and the moral principles of our nature. The cost at which these are obtained are labor, restraint and self denial.

Those who cannot or will not pay the price, do not enjoy the blessing. The thoughtless, the idle, sow the wind and reap the whirlwind; they pass through life, with their intellects weak and sickly, and do nothing great and manly; in *morals*, unstable and unsound, and if assailed by temptation, as they most assuredly will be, they become vicious and degraded.

The first and prominent subject, which I would aim to cultivate early and always in the mind of the student, is *truth*. If, however, this principle has not been impressed upon his mind long before he comes *here*, our duty will be a hopeless task.

To arrive at truth is the object of *all* investigations, whether they relate to the abstract or concrete, and whether the evidence on which belief is founded, be probable or demonstrative.



Truth is the foundation of all society; without it none can exist; it is inherent in the universal understanding of man. The opposite of truth is falsehood, but this never passes current, without putting on the semblance of truth.

Right and wrong are other names for truth and falsehood. The one contains the elements of prosperity, the other of adversity.

Truth in action has its origin in truth of opinion; hence the importance of our opinions being founded in truth.

We have no right to believe wrong, since error in opinion leads to error in practice. We are held responsible for our belief. This being the case, it is not a matter of indifference what we believe, even if we are sincere.

We are bound to believe the *truth*; it is our duty, therefore, to *search* for it as for "hid treasures."

In many forms in which truth is presented, it is objective in its character—that is, it is beyond and independent of us. It would be true, if we had never thought or reflected, or even had never existed.

Truth is not only objective, but subjective also. The truth respecting our own nature and being, whether moral, intellectual, or physical, is important for us to know and appreciate. How many have been shipwrecked on the sea of life, by being ignorant of the truth of this position? We can never violate the principles of truth, except at great cost.

We are presented, philosophically, with many elements of humanity, viz., the idea of the useful, the just, the beautiful, the divine, and the true, each and all being or involving the true. Can, therefore,

any system of education be at all complete, that does not aim to keep prominently before the mind of the pupil the truth, the love of the truth? It admits of cultivation—it ought to be cultivated.

These opinions are verified from the rapid degradation, which we observe to take place in the individual, who violates the truth. All wrong committed with design, always impairs, to a greater or less degree, the moral principles of the perpetrator; the violation of truth, more so than most others. So long as a proper sense of veracity can be maintained in the mind of a youth, whatever may be his vices, we may reasonably entertain hopes of reclaiming him. It is not so with the habit of falsehood; I know of nothing, which is so certain an indication of earthly ruin.

These views are not entertained hastily, or formed without careful examination; they are the result of my experience in intercourse with students, for more than a quarter of a century.

I should be unworthy of the place with which I have been honored, and untrue to the cause of education, did I fail to urge the importance of it, for its own sake, for the happiness it legitimately may confer on its possessor.

Who can estimate the value of a well-trained intellect, a cultivated taste, an enlightened conscience, and a sober, pure imagination? They are above all price.

I revert to another subject, although it may not concern students exclusively.

There are, unfortunately, those who believe and avow the opinion, that the wild and irregular boy ultimately makes the most useful member of society, and that the student, who is the most adroit and cunning in perpe-



trating mischief or creating disturbances, is the one who succeeds best in after life. This opinion is not supported by facts; nay, is contrary to facts, for the truth of which I appeal to all instructors, particularly to those connected with our higher institutions of learning. I have often conversed with many instructors on this very subject; they have always deemed the idea most pernicious and untrue. There is sometimes an exception, yet it is very rare; such cases are known and referred to. The others are, like the individuals themselves, out of sight and forgotten, except, perhaps, through the anguish of parental solicitude. The students who are most docile in disposition, moral and correct in their habits, attentive and faithful in the discharge of all their duties, are those in whom reasonable public expectation is realized.

We shall, therefore, make truth, *truth*, the great and leading principle of action; perceiving and maintaining it, the great aim of all our efforts in this institution; whilst order, *order*, shall prevail in all its departments.

The course of study to be pursued in the Free Academy is, perhaps, sufficiently indicated by the departments already established by the honorable Board of Education; from which it will be seen that the demonstrative and practical sciences are to occupy a prominent place; not that other branches of instruction are to be neglected—far otherwise; facilities are to be afforded for those who desire the acquisition of the most liberal learning. In this respect, as well as many others, provision has been made to meet the wants of a most active and enlightened community.

When we refer to practical education, we intend that general education which best qualifies for the

practical adaptation of the intellectual powers to any given subject.

The object of education, not professional, considered primarily, has not in view so much to give information, as to train the mind of the pupil for the investigation of all subjects in all pursuits. The mind is the great engine, which we are to fit up by education for a future use. Superiority of mind in any avocation, and superiority of cultivation, other things being equal, will always attain the ascendancy.

In this country, the general welfare resulting from the nature of the government, requires a great amount of talent and acquirement to enact the laws, to decide upon their application, and to execute the public will, when duly declared by its authorized agents. In many forms of public law, from their inception to their execution, highly cultivated intelligence is indispensable.

There is, perhaps, no civilized country now existing, which requires so many persons, and such varied and disciplined talent, to carry on its government. The education of the youth of such a country, even for these purposes, becomes imperative, and if neglected, the question will soon be decided which is the worst, an ignorant magistracy or a corrupt one.

Before closing, I will beg to be indulged in making a few remarks to those who have been recently admitted to the privileges of this institution.

By the providence of God, my young friends, we are brought into intimate relationship. How long this may continue, and whether for good or for evil, none can now tell. You occupy a most distinguished and interesting position, being the first pupils admitted



into the Free Academy ; you are in the front rank, the post of honor ; your names will, therefore, be for ever borne upon its records.

It is presumed that you are anxious for the future ; we certainly are anxious for you. This city has, with an unanimity almost unknown in any other public measure, incurred great expense for you, and for those who are to occupy these seats after you. The patriotic and disinterested friends of education here have also devoted much time to devise, mature and execute the best plan, by which every boy in the city may enjoy the advantages of a complete and finished education. The result of their labors thus far, has been the rearing of this noble structure and the appointment of officers to execute the public will.

All this is but preparation ; the rest will depend in a great measure upon you ; none can help you, if you do not help yourselves. You may have been very solicitous on the subject of your first examination, and entertained the opinion, that it would be the most severe trial of the kind, with which you would have to meet, during your academic course. Such is not the case. Your subsequent examinations will be even more severe and critical. *They* must be sustained, or you will not be advanced. If you complete the studies in any department of this institution, we intend that it shall be good evidence of "comprehensive and accurate scholarship" in that department ; any other course would be unfair to you, and a violation of our public trust. You are all here on the same level, and whether it will be broken will depend on yourselves. You may imagine that there will be no distinctions here ; this is a mistake. The distinctions, however, which

may arise here, will result entirely from the application of the laws which our Maker has ordained, depending entirely on moral and intellectual qualities; other than *these* we most solemnly repudiate.

It is oftentimes supposed by students, and sometimes by their friends, that unless they commit some gross overt act, they do not forfeit their places. We entertain a different opinion, and so far as the discipline may depend upon us, shall act on a different principle. We conceive that the city is under no obligation to furnish the highest education to those who do not positively possess good traits of character. If any of you, therefore, shall so far forget your duty to your parents, to yourselves, to your country (which has so liberally provided for you), as to neglect your studies, absent yourselves from your places without good reason, or shall manifest in any manner an unwillingness to observe the rules of the Free Academy, it will be our duty to replace you by others more worthy. This may seem too severe and unnecessarily rigid; yet, if you reflect a moment, you will see the propriety and justice of it. Who are to be punished for the violation of the academic peace—the good or the bad? And who are entitled to the protection of the law from the contagion of evil example? Is it not the innocent? While I thus speak, I hope better things of you, and things that make for peace.

Our duty to you, as officers in our present relation, cannot be better described than in the words of Milton, who exhorts instructors “to inflame their scholars with the study of learning, and the admiration of virtue, to infuse into their breasts such an incredible diligence and courage, such an ingenious and noble ardor,



as will not fail to make many of them renowned and matchless men, and worthy patriots, dear to God and famous to all ages."

Here you will always be treated kindly, affectionately, generously and justly. Our sympathies are all with students; we share with their trials, their adversity, and rejoice in their prosperity. With sentiments then of interest and confidence in you, and with congratulations on the bright prospects, which, with reasonable care and diligence are before you, we bid you, young friends, a cordial welcome to the Free Academy.

## ADDRESS OF HON. W. F. HAVEMEYER,

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

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MR. PRESIDENT,

I have witnessed the interesting ceremonies of this occasion with much gratification, and I am sure this gratification is shared by the members of the municipal government, and the large number of our fellow citizens now present. I cannot, therefore, forbear to express, in their behalf as well as my own, to the gentlemen of the Board of Education, who have had charge of the organization of this institution, our thanks for the fidelity, energy and spirit—at once judicious and liberal—with which they have fulfilled so important a trust. If there be any case in which government may safely and properly extend its action beyond the simple function of administering justice between man and man, it is for the purpose of instructing and educating the citizens, on whom, in our country, must ultimately rest the responsibility for the wise and just exercise of all the delegated powers of society. The Common Schools are the basis of the system which seeks to accomplish this great object—they reach the whole mass of the people—they put within the power of the humble and the poor the means of securing good instruction.



By an influence co-extensive with universal suffrage, they not only aim to fit the people to discharge the duties of citizens having an equal voice in the government of the country, but they tend to lessen the inequalities of the social condition, by enabling all to enter with equal advantages, as far as education is concerned, upon all the competitions of life. To hold out the strongest of honorable incentives to diligence, in improving the opportunities afforded by the Common Schools—to generate a salutary emulation among the vast numbers whose education is to be received, and whose characters are to be formed in them, is an object of the greatest importance. And how can this be so fitly or so wisely done as in the manner proposed by this institution? Not by prizes or distinctions, which are ephemeral in everything, except in the flattery they administer to the vanity; but by holding out the assurance that those who avail themselves most faithfully and effectually of the advantages offered in the Common Schools, shall have the opportunity of gratuitous instruction in the higher departments of education. This institution, while it surmounts the Common School system, strengthens and adorns it. If wisely administered, it will act most beneficially upon the whole mass of those who are embraced in the inferior departments. For my own part, I cannot regard with indifference anything which is calculated to improve our system of public instruction. It is our chief security for good government, and the protection of the rights of person and property.

Our Public Schools are now forming the characters of those who will, in a brief period, supersede us in the active duties of life, and in exercising the powers

of government. Our country is advancing in a career of accumulating wealth, population and power, which has no parallel. The influences of our Common Schools go wherever the foresight of our government extends our jurisdiction, or the adventurous spirit of our people pours the tide of emigration. Amid the social and civil revolutions which are convulsing other parts of the world, our own country is proceeding on its march to greatness, not only undisturbed, but with accelerated rapidity. The imagination fails to anticipate what is to be the meridian of that age of which this generation sees but the dawn. Whether that meridian shall be overcast by gloom and doubt, or shall be resplendent as its present promise, must depend upon the intelligence of the people. To have been even an humble instrument in founding or carrying forward systems of instruction which are materially to affect such a future, is no common honor; and this edifice, to-day consecrated to purposes so high and noble, will be a monument of the enlightened labors of you, sir, and your associates, as well as of the beneficence of our citizens, which has aided and sustained you in the accomplishment of the work.