

accomplished after a Kitchener-like advance, in which each step at a time was buttressed and battlemented by coordinated facts until the summit was attained and the fortress was won. It was an irresistible march of the horse, foot and artillery of scientific endeavor. The attack upon rubber, on the other hand, recalls nothing so much as the raid of the adventurers accompanying Cortes into the wilds of Mexico. Ludicrously few in number and ill equipped save with a *downtless spirit*, they plunged desperately into a wilderness absolutely unknown and denized by countless thousands of a malignant and disciplined enemy; yet they conquered Mexico. The conquest of Mexico was incredible, it was *unreasonable* to the military tactician; so is the conquest of rubber incredible to the tactician of scientific research.

Allow me to quote another sentence which I think shows one of the great elements of his leadership.

Of course I have forgotten something. I have forgotten the afternoon tire in the garish light of the laboratories, the hard cot at night by the laboratory table, the broken experiments, and the heart-breaking disappointments to endeavor. But so did Marco Polo, for you will look in vain through all his glowing pages for the bitter cold of the morning camp, or the intolerable heat of the desert or of the pain of insect pests, or of his sorrow at the loss of his goods—all forgotten in the retrospect of his wonderful journey.

Valery-Radot wrote two delightful volumes giving us a picture of Louis Pasteur, yet there are two incidents which to me are most illuminating and recall Doctor Duncan. The author tells us of Pasteur's anguish on the occasion of the death of a boy from rabies. Pasteur forthwith undertook an investigation of the subject. Finally one sees this great, tender-hearted man with all the wonderful vision of his mature years brought near death's door and in one last spasm of effort crying: "We must work. We must work." And so Robert Kennedy Duncan was removed by the accident of death just as his dreams, his great constructive dreams, for the amelioration of man seemed to be in the dawn of their fulfillment. Only last December Doctor Duncan attended the Atlanta meeting of the American Association for the Advancement

of Science and met Dr. Howard A. Kelly. Sixty thousand people dying of cancer in this country every year! He returned from that meeting burning with a desire to do something. The idea that radium is and undoubtedly always will be beyond the reach of thousands of these sufferers, *that* was what appealed to him. Couldn't something be done about it? He believed there could. He told his ideas to a Pittsburgh business man, who very quickly said, "It would give me real pleasure to help you tackle this thing."

Another sentence of Doctor Duncan's will always stick in my mind and I think gives us a clue to his fine spiritual nature. In discussing the synthesis of ammonia from nitrogen and hydrogen he recalls that up to 1908 the best work of Haber, Nernst and others had failed to give results of industrial promise and as Dr. Duncan said of Nernst's work:

With this final investigation, then, it was "thumbs down" for the subject; it was finished, exhausted, dead.

But Professor Haber had a feeling that the thing could be done. Doctor Duncan says:

It is to be understood that this "feeling" which possessed Haber was not the obsession of an ignorant dreamer but was actually the expression of a *faith that lay deeper than reason* on the part of one who knew, possibly better than any one else from the standpoint of reason, its folly.

The splendid qualities which he so admired in others he himself possessed. It has ever been such rare spirits which have done the impossible, have pointed the way.

THE WELLESLEY COLLEGE FIRE

THE fire at Wellesley College on March 17, which totally destroyed College Hall, the oldest and largest building, has brought great loss to the college and has greatly disabled four science departments.

College Hall, which originally contained the whole college community, at the time of the fire was a dormitory for two hundred and fifteen students, and also held the offices of the administration, the lecture rooms for the greater part of the college, and the laboratories of the departments of geology, physics,

psychology and zoology. The entire equipment and the collections of each of these four sciences are destroyed, and the department libraries of geology, physics and zoology. As a consequence, these departments are seriously crippled and are in great need of assistance.

The collections of the geology department were very valuable and some were very rare mineral specimens. Recently many new cases had been acquired and space for exhibition. The lantern of this department was the only piece of apparatus that survived the fire, but the thousands of lantern slides were destroyed.

The more important losses to physics are lantern slides, collection of crystals, a unique collection of Nicol prisms, and complete files of the important scientific journals, some dating back to 1800.

Besides the actual equipment, the most serious loss to the psychology department is the destruction of its records of experiments, memory and intelligence tests on normal and abnormal subjects, the results of several years of work.

The zoology museum was far richer than was generally known. It was inadequately housed and crowded, and its specimens were never displayed to advantage. The collections represented the results of many years of labor and of careful selection, and were essentially study collections, planned for special courses, and constantly in use by different groups of students. The losses which will be felt most keenly by the individual courses are the North American birds and insects, the general invertebrate collections, recently enriched by material from the zoological station at Naples, the mounted and disarticulated skeletons, the histology and embryology slides, and the physiology apparatus.

The personal losses of the teaching staff are very great. In the zoology and psychology departments alone, original work, drawings, notes, collections, microscopes and apparatus, books and reprints, all are gone.

Aid has come already in generous measure to the four stricken departments from many colleges and museums near Boston, from Clark University, Mt. Holyoke College, the

University of Pennsylvania, Vassar College, and from former students and friends of Wellesley; and material has been lent and given that will enable the scientific courses to reopen with the rest of the college on April 7, in the laboratories of the departments of astronomy, botany, chemistry and hygiene, all of which are in separate buildings and are therefore untouched by this disaster.

Our future needs are very great, buildings, equipment, material for work, museum specimens, books. May the realization of these needs bring yet more help to our support.

CAROLINE BURLING THOMPSON
WELLESLEY COLLEGE

THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

THE president of the University of Iowa has, under the date of March 20, 1914, addressed to the Iowa State Board of Education, the following letter:

By this letter I submit to you my resignation as president of the State University of Iowa, to take effect at your earliest convenience. Some explanation of this action is due to you and to those interested in the welfare of the university. Such explanation follows:

At the meeting of your board held at Cedar Falls, March 11, you considered in executive session a number of administrative matters concerning the university. Among other things at that time you dismissed a professor of the university without a hearing and without the knowledge or advice of the chief executive of the institution. Whether or not the facts, if you have them, warranted the professor's dismissal is not now the issue to which I call your attention; and I pass over for the moment the obvious fact that the professor himself had a right to be heard. I can not avoid the inference that your action is deliberately intended to express lack of confidence in the administration of the university.

Before I came to the university in 1911 I asked you in writing to consider thoroughly the step you proposed; it was for you to decide whether or not I was the man for the place and I called your attention to this fact. As part of the terms on which I finally accepted the position you agreed in writing that all recommendations for appoint-