

Oberlin College Commencement
Wednesday, June 22, 1910 —

After conferring the degrees upon the regular graduating classes, Dr. William E. Mosher with the following characterizations presented to Mr. A. S. Root, Chairman of the Faculty, Rev. J. M. P. Metcalf for the degree of Doctor of Divinity, Mr. Charles M. Hall for the degree of Doctor of Laws, and Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright for the degree of Doctor of Laws.

John Milton Putnam Metcalf

Mr. Chairman, it is highly fitting, that Oberlin College should pay due recognition to the work of one of her own sons, who has identified himself with the movement of awakening the negro race to an appreciation of its privileges and responsibilities, through the medium of academic, normal and vocational training. Talladega College of Alabama has long been one of the prominent centers for the dissemination of those educative forces which are ultimately destined to complete the emancipation of the negro, freeing him from his moral, mental and economic serfdom. The president of such an institution must in himself combine the qualities of the trained scholar, the inspired religious and moral teacher, the liberal-minded, humanitarian educator and the sane, sympathetic administrator. Such a man I take pleasure in presenting to you, Mr. Chairman, in President John Milton Putnam Metcalf of the class of 1885, for the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Charles Martin Hall

I have the privilege, Mr. Chairman, of presenting to you one who has long brought honor to the home of his Alma Mater because of the practical application of the methods and principles of science toward the production of a metal which within the space of two decades has become a staple and indispensable commodity in the markets of the world. The invention of the inexpensive process of the production of aluminum is an achievement which bears witness not alone to real genius, endowed as it is with the power to see the fundamental, essential relations of things with immediate and direct vision, but also to the more human quality of untiring, unrelenting and ever hoping perseverance, that recognizes obstacles only to overcome them; the perseverance that enabled the young college graduate in totally inadequate surroundings, with totally inadequate facilities, to perfect a process for producing aluminum which is deserving of the plaudits and admiration of his scientific contemporaries.

The inventor is furthermore worthy of the highest honor within the power of Oberlin College to confer because of his liberal, many-sided interests in the various aspects of the life of his time. He is a man of deep personal culture, a high-minded citizen alive to all opportunities for civic and public service as well as a beneficent supporter and counselor of the College which stands for the ideals of labor and learning, ideals which he has so happily combined and exemplified in his own career. I have the honor of presenting to you, Mr. Chairman, Charles Martin Hall of the class of 1885 for the degree of Doctor of Laws.

Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright

One of the primal and basic instincts of the mind of man is that instinct which bids him subdue, master, become free. And the most uplifting experiences of life are those in which the human will and the human intellect assert their

(re Wilbur and Orville Wright)

sovereign freedom in the presence of fettering necessity, be it the necessity of outward law, condition or circumstance. The generation in which we live is unequalled in all history with respect to the signal success achieved by mind over matter, by man over nature, by free will over necessity. Without exaggeration it may be asserted that these successes find their fitting and significant culmination in the realization of the dream and hope of poets and inventors throughout the very centuries of the past, the dream and hope of mastering the air-world, of "adding the highways of the eagle to the human paths."

It is highly appropriate that Oberlin College, always ready to uphold the ideal of John Frederick Oberlin, should bestow upon the two tireless dreamers of the conquest of the air, its highest academic honors, not because we would vie with the world, that delights to do homage to brilliant success, but because we would honor the spirit which brought success -- the spirit of invincible, indomitable determination to master stern necessity, not by means of foolhardy adventuresomeness nor through the vagaries of chance, but rather through the unquestionably scientific method of thoroughgoing, painstaking research and experimentation, the method of unprejudiced, candid investigation which step by step eliminates the false and verifies the true. It is the student-dreamers, the practical visionaries, Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright of Dayton, Ohio, whom I have the honor to present to you, Mr. Chairman, for the degree of Doctor of Laws.

CAROLUM MARTIN HALL, inventorem studiosum, qui suppeditato una aetate

hominum ad usum omnium metallo prius paene ignoto

LEGUM DOCTORIS

WILBUR WRIGHT, machinatione volandi rationis diligentem investigatorem,

callidum inventorem, qui subiecto hominibus aere

LEGUM DOCTORIS

ORVILLE WRIGHT (as above)

LEGUM DOCTORIS