The College Board

LINDENWOOD.

By President Charles F. Ayers, Ph.D.

Lindenwood is not adequately equipped for carrying on the distinctive work in which she, in common with the vast majority of other new colleges, was founded. The seminary field is a peculiar and distinct one. The seminary is not a college but is a preparatory school for a large number of our daughters. It is not a college preparatory school, for it must give attention to many things not connected with the collegiate course and must, for a regular course, and must necessarily, because of time considerations, leave out some things demanded in a preparatory school. The seminary was and to some extent still remains is the extreme rear guard of the educational army as it takes its march through the generations of growth. It is both of the old and the new.

The seminary is by no means an anachronism however, but rather is in the forefront of the thirty-year scheme of education, but is an important factor in even our modern schemes of pedagogy. But the seminary that is to live and grow and make evident conditions. Its equipment and methods must be in keeping with the progress of the spirit of our people. The public school must be the model, and very much modified the field over which the seminary once queened. However, it still must be the same field in the country with few teachers and slight equipment and have arrogated to themselves this same field, once the undisputed possession of the seminary. There are now in spite of the encroachment of the public high schools and that of schools not of this character for many years before the march of education will have left the seminary entirely in the rear and taken away its value as an educational institution. This is the field which Lindenwood will naturally occupy for a few years yet until we can grow into the postion which is wooling us so invitingly here in the twenties and forties. Our facilities for occupying this field as we should are still inadequate. I do not wish to harass you with my distressing story of poverty, because it means poverty stricken. We simply are not fitted for seminary work in a style in keeping with the Presbyterian Church in Missouri, for it is a fact that the Presbytery in Missouri is not poor nor lacking in that character which demands that every institution whose church stands sponsor of the very best.

We are not the best outfitted seminary in property and equipments for carrying on a school of our character in this section. We lack building facilities. I know that the Presbyterian Church of Missouri has too often met our requests for better and larger buildings and when we demand that we raise the one we have. Granted that we have, as yet failed to do this, we are at least striving to be attractive as any school of the same character in this section. That this is not the case can be seen by a comparison of our building with what our class such as Monticello or Forest Park. We need three thousand dollars for overhauling and remodeling our present building and bringing it up to the present demands for the class to which we by rights belong. We need new floors, new arrangements, new furniture throughout. But above all we need a new dormitory building, not so much in that we may be the finer, but that we may be the best.

With its ideal location and grounds, with its splendid history and prestige which comes from many years of useful work and the additional fact that is known in every portion of this Middle West, ought as easily command an attendance of one hundred and fifty as the sixty-eight boarding pupils we have. A school of that size properly managed ought to have a very substantial surplus each year for the use of the board in excess of the support of the school or that size ought to insure an income of at least $40,000. The increased expense of such a plant over that of the sixty-eight boarding pupils we have means that our school is too large.

This increase would fall mainly upon the domestic and music, education and art departments, as practically the same literary faculty would do them as now. Given this increased earning capacity and the school could be made a source of an ever increasing improvement to itself. There is such a thing as being too large and too small at the same time. As mothers at present stand with Lindenwood to fill their dreams for a nice little family school and too small to realize her true destiny as the leading seminary for young women in the Missis- sippi Valley, we must consider the present basis or as a college, Lindenwood has reached the forking of the road of the future. She will either have to go forward and occupy her rightful position as the pioneer and leading ladies’ seminary of this section, and on to the path of future invincibility, or she can become the first real woman’s college of the territory west of the Mississippi river or take the other fork which leads to a poor feeble and seminary. This is a possibility which we wish to avoid as much. The only possible danger that such a fate is in the offing our worries will come from inertia on the part of the Presbyterians of Missouri.

But to revert to the demand which the moneyed interests of Presbytery have made of us that we fill to its fullest extent our present capacity before our plea for larger and better accommodations of students shall be heard and heed and is too large to be overruled by the generous donors of our Church. Our answer to such a demand this fall is that we are crowded into uncomfortable quarters in the character of work which is rightly de- manded of us. My plea for increased quarters has been met with the necessary information that at one period in its career Lindenwood accommodated about eighty-five boarding pupils. I do not question the necessity of the growth of our city, but I question the justice of demanding that we to-day can do what was done thirteen years ago. Times have changed. Our strongest competitor in this section in those days were suffering from the same congestion of room which faces us this fall. Patrons of seminaries were not then afforded the alternative, and could choose between a canoe of character and prestige, crowded into uncomfortable quarters, using bedrooms for music, and on the other side be solicited by schools of good character and not lacking in prestige, with comfortable and commodious quarters for schools and voca- tory purposes. The glory and prestige and splendid work of the inadequately equipped school in too many cases succumbed to the superior physique and attractions of the otherwise less favored school. In the matter of competition with these schools of its class Lindenwood now is at least 25 per cent. better off than she was. We must add to this difficulty in the matter of crowding girls into such overcrowded conditions, the fact of the growth and development of the public high school. A much larger number of girls were then forced to leave their homes in order to secure the advantages of any kind of a higher education than now. The seminary which can draw these girls away from their homes must be able to offer much greater attractions in an educational comfort way than did the seminary of even thirteen years ago. Considering these changed conditions to which we have referred at some length, our present enrollment of sixty-eight boarding pupils furnishes a more congested condition than did the eighty-five of the former rec- ord. We are more or less suffering from a congested condition at this very time. We must not let the Church forget this. There is a really present crisis for the Presbyterian Church which owns and maintains Lindenwood to meet and success- fully meet. Our recitation rooms are poorly situated and in every way inadequate for the demands of modern education. We are greatly hampered in the lack of space for the proper placing and of even the limited amount of ap- pliances which we possess. We certainly very much need a regular school build- ing. We are compelled to place our prac- tice rooms in every available nook and cranny, resorting to the expedient of placing them in the living rooms of our school. My contention is that for thirty thousand dollars I could build two such buildings that would answer all our purposes for at least ten years to come, or even longer.