A Tribute From the Trustees

The death of James T. Smith brings to all his previous associates in the corporation of the Lowell Textile School a sincere sorrow and a deep feeling of a keen loss which comes to them individually, to the city in which he lived, and to the school which he was instrumental in building. During the first twenty years when we engaged in establishment, organization, and development of the Lowell Textile School he was the leader who pointed the way. Some who might disagree with him for a time came to understand him and to see more clearly the object to which we were working. His courage, determination, and extreme optimism many times caused the trustees to undertake responsibilities greater than they perhaps ought to assume. As I look back on those early years of the school I wonder that they did these and can account for their actions in no other way except through his convincing arguments and their growing confidence in him and his project.

The Lowell Textile School was indeed fortunate in having on the Board of Trustees a man of his personality with such loyalty and devotion to a cause. He gave generously of his time, strength, and thought. The school was his life and he gloried in it.

The present Board of Trustees fully realize the work he began and are endeavoring to carry it on upon the broad foundation which he helped to lay down but with such modifications as the times and advancement in industry and education warrant. The spirit and influence of James T. Smith will exert an influence for many years.

ARTHUR G. POLLARD,
Chairman of Board of Trustees.

A Tribute by Judge Frederick Lawton Supreme Court

When Mr. Smith was laying the foundation of the Lowell Textile School certain ideas which are now generally accepted, were unknown. The specially trained expert outside the professions had not arrived. At least one of the Lowell mill agents of that day rejected the idea of the school and stayed out, saying that the only way to learn the mill business was to begin at the bottom and work up. The idea that a knowledge of the whole business would make a man more efficient in his particular part of the work was a novel and a doubtful proposition. For these ideas Mr. Smith had to fight with the mill men of 1894.

A generation ago it was not a familiar commonplace as it is now that the best way to meet competition is to make better goods. We also were then just beginning to realize that it was no longer true in the United States that "the home market is enough". Mr. Smith urged these two ideas to the Legislature as reasons for the Textile School.

Perhaps it is hardly fair to use the words fight or urge. He met with no active opposition. His task, once the splendid scheme was fixed in his own mind, was to convince and persuade the mill men, the agents, and treasurers, and owners to adopt it as their plan, the Legislature to sanction and assist it, and later the Lowell City Government to lend its further financial aid. But that was a simple easy task. A lighter could have wrecked the scheme. The man who must have things his own exact way, without modification, could have wrecked it. He was a wonderful combination of unyielding persistence with diplomatic shrewdness and consummate tact.

I speak of him only as the Founder. Others are better qualified to speak of him as the Builder. He should be remembered however, not only as the founder and builder of our Lowell Textile School but as a keen, broad-minded, intellectual pioneer, an early protagonist of the now generally accepted idea of the value of education and specialized training in business of manufacturing.
A Brief Sketch of the Life of James T. Smith

By CHARLES H. EAMES, President of L. T. S.

The student who attended the Lowell Textile School during the first fifteen or eighteen years will recall the familiar old gentleman who daily was seen crossing the Moody Street bridge and entering the school. He was always deep in thought and frequently was heard to be talking to himself. Everyone, whether student or resident, old or young, came to know him as the Father of the Lowell Textile School. He was this to every student shortly after his arrival in Lowell and the respect and veneration for him grew in their hearts and minds as undergraduates to fill love and esteem with which he was held by all alumni.

No gathering of alumni was complete without James T. Smith. He joined in the outbursts of enthusiasm, cheers and songs that were the outward evidences of the sincere loyalty to the institution which was his conception and a part of his life. Anyone who gave praise and expressed the real value of the work which the school was doing was his friend always and equally true it may be that he who questioned its importance or doubted the wisdom of money appropriation for its furtherance was his enemy and worse to that man if occasion gave Mr. Smith a chance to express his mind. Truly the school was his child and he could see it only as a father can. His virtues of its future were greater and grander than those of anyone else. Not only did he have the vision but he had the confidence that it could be made reality and his plans and supporting arguments carried his associates with him, gave them assurance and return cooperation that brought money, land, buildings and equipment. "Where there is no vision the people perish." Truly his was the vision that not only prevented the failure of textile education in this state but carried it into the field of higher education, strengthening it by the recognized methods of teaching applied science.

He gave encouragement to all who would advance the standing of the school and broaden its field of activity.

Many an alumnus would recall visits to the school and a call on Mr. Smith. His hearty greeting and earnest questions concerning the work of the alumnus would put one at ease. The experiences of the graduate would bring forth plans under consideration to broaden the curriculum or would serve to assure Mr. Smith that some of his theories were right and should be put into practice.

The early history of the school when its continuance was doubtful, how the assistance and cooperation of friends and trustees were obtained, the receipt of the hearings and legislation that provided means to further his plans were always clearly in his mind and it was his joy to reiterate them for each meant a victory won, a hope brought to fruition. Interpersonal with these accounts was many a personal touch, an appropriate story, and a bit of humor made the call one not to be forgotten. If he were in an argumentative frame of mind it would be difficult to refrain from being drawn into a discussion, for his natural enjoyment in detaining fostered by experiences of high school days and on the political platform made him keen to take either side of a question. This was especially true if he were in search of information as his keen thrusts, sharp and leading questions were destined to take one unawares and bring as a defence the information he might desire.

His accounts of his experiences as a traveling salesman for J. C. Ayer Company when a young man were both interesting and amusing. Following these would come the events of his life in Illinois just previous to the Civil War. We got a touch of the rough life he entered, of his part in maintaining peace and his natural ability in organization. He would tell of his experience with an undisciplined and demoralized regiment of volunteers, of communication with the governor and of the arrival of a quiet, unassuming but dignified army officer. He would lead his hearer on to an interesting way by giving in detail the work of this young officer and his success in bringing order out of disorder, of his expressed desire to Mr. Smith, who was adjutant, to enter the campaign with some military command, of Mr. Smith's recommendation to the governor that this officer be put in command of this same regiment. Then would our friend bring the climax by
informing you that this was none other than General U. S. Grant. With a chuckle he would continue the narration of Grant's first lesson in discipline by marching the regiment past the railroad station where it was to embark and ten miles through the open country that all might come to realize the seriousness of the business in which they had entered.

Later Mr. Smith enlisted as a private in Company H of the 54th Illinois regiment. He saw service in the southwest. He was in action at the siege of Vicksburg and soon after was made First Lieutenant and Adjutant. This was in the campaign through Arkansas and Louisiana. His last service was through Arkansas to learn where conditions justified evacuation.

It was always interesting to hear the account of the establishment of Memorial Day. Following the war he became located in Washington, D. C., as commander of the Potomac, Grand Army of the Republic, with an office in the same building with General John A. Logan. He tells of receiving a letter from Ohio suggesting that a day be observed for the decoration of the graves of the soldiers. He referred the letter to General Logan's aide who wrote a very scholarly letter to the General setting forth the merits of the day. Approval was given by General Logan who was then Commander-in-Chief of the G. A. R. and orders were issued to all posts throughout the country setting aside May 30th as Memorial Day. Mr. Smith conducted the first service held on that day in 1868 at Arlington Heights, Virginia.

The close of the war found him chief of one of the divisions in the Treasury Department. His interest in postal accounts caused the Secretary to send him abroad in 1883 to study methods in use in foreign countries. At that time he had an opportunity to visit some of the textile schools and observe their work. While not in accord with the methods and standards of these schools he appreciated the possibilities of a textile school and textile education. Later when he was studying the textile situation in the New England states during the years 1883 to 1885 he recalled the schools visited across the water in 1883.

A biography of James T. Smith for the next twenty years is the history of the Lowell Textile School for the same period, so closely was his daily life and thought connected with the school. He believed that the beginnings of cotton mill development which were most evident in 1834 from investment of some northern capital in the cotton growing states, were only the commencement of larger undertakings and that some at least of the cotton business would go and remain in the South. He advocated finer goods for northern mills, the encouragement of more highly skilled operatives and the establishment of a textile school to give systematic training. He constantly advocated the higher and broader training copied from that of the technological schools and colleges. This policy attracted and held on the instructing staff men trained in science as well as those of experience who could and did coordinate with the text.

He held to the belief that the school should serve the state as well as the city and consequently the Board of Trustees have been selected from various parts of the state. Later he advanced a representation of the alumni on the Board and with the support of the trustees offered a bill providing for selection of such members for terms. Several years following, some of these alumni members were elected as members of the corporation. Since this time the alumni has been well represented.

His account of the selection of a site for a permanent home, the work of several members of the Board in interesting others to contribute, land, money and machinery is familiar to those who have in the past listened to his narrative. His description of how the design which was on the present campus as well as the land on the west side of Moody Street was leased out, removed for use in road building in other parts of the city gave one a realization that not only was he engaged in the erection of the school buildings but he saw to it that sufficient land was acquired to insure that no encroachment would be made to injure the school.

Mr. Smith was born in Lowell January 28, 1837. His parents were William M. Smith and Lavinia G. (Hardy) Smith. He always retained an intense interest in the welfare of his native City following keenly the important political changes as well as the economic and industrial changes. His experience before congressional committees during his term in the Treasury Department gave him an accurate knowledge of legislative procedure, an asset that was most valuable when pleading before state legislative committees the cause of the school in its early days. He was

Franklin W. Hobbs, the Chairman

"Although the establishment of this school was proposed early in 1831, it was not until six years later that its sessions actually began. During all this time quiet but active work was being done to prepare the way for it, and to the far-sighted, mean efforts of Trustee James T. Smith the school will always be deeply indebted for its success.

I take pleasure in introducing Mr. Smith, who has been aptly called "The Father of the Lowell Textile School."

The Lowell Textile School

"The hour and arrangements for transportation will not admit of very full treatment of this subject at this stage of the proceedings. As this great school has grown under our hands we have looked forward to a day like this when in the presence of the official representatives of the Commonwealth and of its leading industries and educational institutions it would not be necessary for one to rise to the topic assigned me, for a great poly-technical institute imposingly and commodiously housed, generously equipped, with an able and experienced corps of instructors would speak more intelligently and interestingly for itself.

"Its phenomenal growth has attracted wide attention at home and abroad and various have been the impressions as to its character. At first it was associated in the public mind with manual training and trade schools; in providing for evening instruction it was hailed as humanitarian—a great charity of that better sort that gives opportunity to its beneficiaries to advance and does not impair them but as its branches spread and new departments on Schools continued to develop it was disdained with the title of University. It has, however, resisted all efforts to classify it. It met a demand from the graduates of the higher educational institutions for thorough instruction in applied textiles. But pupils from the public schools and these coming about four-fifths of the applicants for day instruction, required also thorough instruction in general chemistry, mechanical engineering, advanced mathematics, and decorative art. Then the operations in our mills and schools with limited schooling and means required short practical evening courses. And our curriculum has grown and broadened as the demand arose. There has always been a clear, definite object in view, and to that fact is the rapid development of the school to be ascribed; that object was the needs of the textile industry, and that these might be met intelligently we provided in our articles of association that three-fourths of the permanent trustees "shall actually engaged in or connected with textile or kindred manufacture."

"Of the 120 pupils taking the regular day courses, 20 are from the higher general educational schools,—the universities and colleges; 82 from the high schools and academies; and 20 from grammar schools. The 138 pupils of the evening classes are mostly from the mills and shops of Lowell and Lawrence and vicinity, though there are those who come four evenings a week from commercial houses of Boston handling textiles. Though we have graduated but four classes, our graduates are well represented in the higher positions of textile manufacture and distribution as superintendents, assistant superintendent, chemists, designers, salesmen, etc., and in the nationally famous and purchasing bureaus and we have not been able to supply the demand.

"The school did not originate in local pride but local need. At the outset it was conceived as a business enterprise through apart from original experimental work, the fact that no benefit could come to the textile manufacture except through the technical education of his employees and the bright youth from our public schools who sought a textile career, added zest to our work; it is of the best form of charities—it gives opportunity to its beneficiaries to help themselves.

"The school originated in a movement to advance the material interests of this community. While the public demand was for new industries and was partially met until the business collapse of 1893, my attention as an officer of an association of business men was early attracted to the character of our textile products and the small value we added to the raw material. While great variety of textile manufacture had been introduced we were merely making the coarse plain cotton, the annual out-of-Lowell mills being estimated at one hundred and fifty miles of cloth per annum. Not only did wages rate low but Southern competition was increasing and apparently the great industry, the manufacture of course plain cotton, that first established here had not only lost the foundation of the prosperity of the great Merrimack water street but of the commercial metropoli of New England, was leaving the State and, if the political economists were correct, that the cost of the necessities of life determined the wage, leaving it permanently. While we were exporting some $72,000,000 of these coarse tex-
tiles annually, largely to the Eastern Asiatic markets, we were importing nearly $190,000,000, mostly of the new grade. How had the foreign manufacturer met our competition in the closest lines? Evidently by raising the grade of his products. Correspondence with our foreign agents abroad, every facility for which was furnished by the national Department of State, and the publications of its exceedingly valuable bureau of foreign commerce, and of the department of education soon disclosed the fact that technical education was a main reliance abroad for creating a class of experts and operatives required for this higher grade manufacture, and the character, scope and practical results of the textile schools of Germany, England, Russia, Switzerland and France were very thoroughly and carefully studied. It early became evident that the need of Lowell was the need of the textile industry of the entire Commonwealth, and the school has therefore taken the character of a State institution.

"But such a school as was required must necessarily embrace all textile fibres and processes and thorough instruction in the arts and sciences applied in textile manufacture, and it would cost a lot of money; one million dollars was my estimate including necessary endowments; and it was not until the assurance of German manufacturers that should the government withhold support, they would sustain the schools because of the value they were to them that had that I ventured to propose one of this comprehensive character here.

Failing to develop it out of the Middlesex Mechanics Association, and President Walker of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, although receiving the proposition favorably, not seeing his way clearly in its early establishment here as a department of the Institute, in the fall of 1834, I invited the representatives of our mill corporations to conference and laid before them the facts I had gathered and my conclusions. From the first the proposition was received favorably, almost with enthusiasm, and under an act passed at the session of 1835 (Chapter 475) the corporation styled the "Trades of the Lowell Textile School" was formed, in the language of the act, "for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a college school for instruction in the mechanical and practical art of textile and kindred branches of industry."

"Having then been somewhat instrumental in getting my associates into this scrape I have felt under obligations to give the best that was in me to carry out the original scheme and make it a success. It has held me by the fascination that new and untried fields always have.

"We have asked the state to aid us during the period of opening and development believing that when thus lifted up in the sight of the public and our graduates and the original work of our experts in multiplying and perfecting textile processes had demonstrated the value of the institution, it would become as firmly established in the reverence and support of the American textile manufacturer as in the great textile schools abroad, and our faith has not been in vain as the generous contributions and steadily growing interest in textile circles evidence.

"The complimentary title Chairman Hobbs has been pleased to bestow on the calls for some explanation.

"A veteran of the civil war in fighting over his battles was asked by his little son, "Papa, didn't you have any one to help you?" The results you see here are the work of many minds mostly rich in business experience and charged with great industrial and commercial responsibilities, the successors of those who established textile manufacture in the wilderness of the Merrimack valley,—the founders of the textile industry on this continent, President Cummack has no doubt of giving credit, but words fail to indicate the value and importance of the service rendered.

"While the Middlesex Mechanics Association about 1835, amicably its charter or constitution to provide for classes and instructors in the industrial arts and sciences, it appears to have gone no further. About 1870, Charles L. Hildreth, Supt. of the Lowell Machine Shop, while chairman of the City Council Committee on lands and buildings and of education, in constructing the Greeley grammar school, provided a large circular hall for mechanical drawing and a high storied well-lighted basement for the installation of textile machinery, and Prof. Charles Whiting, his engineering staff, for 10 years chief of the Department of Mechanical Engineering of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, developed therein what is now our public evening drawing school, that Mr. Hildreth should be the earliest and most liberal contributor to the equipment of this school.

"At the outset, the usefulness of the foreign schools to the industries they represented was clearly demonstrated but would they be as successful under American conditions? In its earlier development our enterprise was therefore necessarily an experiment. An American system of instruction had to be evolved. In Germany something like uniformity of method obtained but in England with the exception of a few schools, established by the cloth guild of London, schools everywhere had been suddenly created by an extraordinary liberal grant by Parliament under the spur of rapidly increasing German rivalry in foreign and domestic markets, the result being as President Mather of the National Association of Technical schools declared, confusion in methods with results not in proportion to the expenditure. Having the experience of England in mind we feared extravagance rather than parsimony at the outset in the grants of public money for textile education.

"During a conservative course we rented rooms and cautiously developed our American system of textile instruction, making some mistakes at first. We hoped that as our graduates located throughout the state, evening schools would sprout up at the textile centres, and, if need arose, in the larger centres the more expensive day courses would follow. Thus the uniform and economical system of textile education throughout the Commonwealth would result. Wherever schools have, in the judgment of the local manufacturers, been demanded, they have received our heartiest cooperation and support.

"We sent our first director to Germany to observe methods and obtain the technical forms used in instruction at the textile schools, but found finally in the leading American technical schools, especially the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the best models for instruction in the sciences and the theory of the textile and kindred industrial arts. With limited means, as the usefulness of the school would depend on the quality of its graduates, we have confined our salary expenditures to chief and assistant instructors, the chief of the department of mechanical engineering serving also as principal of the school. He was graduated and had been assistant instructor in mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, followed by practical experience in the line of his profession. Principal William W. Crosby has able and fully met the requirements of the arduous responsibilities of his dual position. Of our able ch¢ instructors two were graduated with first honors at the older English Textile Schools, and afterwards made high records in their specialties with American manufacturers. We have also drawn liberally on the Institute and other leading technical and scientific schools and have a corps of instructors of which we are proud. Much original and experimental work has been required of them, and they have fully and ably met the demands of the manufacturer and the national department of agriculture. This work is steadily growing in importance.

"This year we expect to complete our buildings and equipment, and to open in October with every department comfortably housed and completely equipped and officered. Future growth is most strongly indicated in mechanical and electrical engineering, decorative art, dyeing, finishing and weaving, although new departments will undoubtedly develop from time to time out of our general lecture course, which covers a wide range of subjects."