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**Title:** "Intellectual Achievement," by John H. Grabill

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Intellectual Achierments Jon H. Grabill

# Intellectual Schwinent

In the actions of man then may be newgrized a sunt power whose influence, though for the most part unseen, shapes the disting and forms the character, Deputhe ent, in part, upon the individual and drawing its vitality from natur, it's tendency is either to elevate the mind or sink man below the position assigned by an intelligent Conator. Tresenting Itself to the choice of the individual, weak and insignificant at first, it is nowished by assu ciation until at length arguing its full sway usistanio proves implicated and stamping its image upon the character of the man, his words become the proof of its existine and his actions the exponent of its power. But whithen it be pure and noble or impure and sulfish its nature is seldom entirely concealed. In A may be newyriged the birth of intellectual achievment. The secret motives unknown to all but the indevidual himself, become the foundation of every effort to advance the true throng of knowledge and to make known those few and important principles upon which depend the existence of man and the harmony of the union verse itself. But and all prompling motives then an non possessing so great inherent stringth, none wilding un influence so weight as the love of truth. Implanted

within the bosom of man by devinity itself and multimed by all the natural ties and associations which we hold most dear, there is a power, there is a samity in love too pur for language too diserible, too vast for imagination too conceine. And when man is once subdued by this strong passion, time, talent, energy, and even life itself are cast us a willing Severific upon the Shrim of truth. What mobler impulse what more exalted emotion can thrill the breast or fondle with affections than the love of truth? Under its influence the overried mind downing sustenance, as it wer, from every passing breeze, neveriges in the starry firmament the beauties as well as the utilities of natures laws, and finds the impress of a Careator upon the rocks concealed for centuries from the view of man. But, while an immense impeters is given by the secret ma times the influence of patient pursurering effort contributes me little aid to intellectual achievment. So that the two grand features of mental debelopment are purity of motion and energetic action. Before the combined efforts of the two impediments which have stood with defrance for centermis, have yielded, as the threatening iceberg which defins the howling blasts and svaring tempests of winter modesty

yields to the gentle embraces of the ound bruze. Genius with its heavenly epithets, though for the moment it may appear clad in all its native beauty, and anakon within the bosom emotions of the puret delight, as the fring meter, must sink to be forgotten so soon as its respliched ent sintillations are lost amid the Surrounding dark. ness. Genies, it is time, may wander through the realms of imagination gelding the beauties of nature with the louch of his own plastic hand, and combining the seathered and apparently incompatible facts into one harmen nions whole but never can the morniments enelted at her shine equal those built up by the untiring industry of intellectual effort. In with what self-surificing zeal those who appear most eminent among the arrivet suges applied themselves to the one quat who jut of enjury, disngarding public opinion not in that buse youth sense in which the hardward wielth finds a pullintion for his some guilt in his own bosom, but with that noble godlike independance in which a man reagings his own responsibility as disconnected with the opinions and associations of others In such efforts have the natural serious found

a purmount foundation. Astronomy, the most difficult and get now the most perfect of all, was dependant upon fluctuating and ill-founded supposition until by the if forts of him whose name is furniliar to all, after forty years of immense study and meditation actuated by no other motion than that of unfolding truth and upplying the unwavering faculties of a will disciplined mind to this one great object; the new and almost sperfect thiony was presented to a world not get cupable of appreciating the truth and beauty of the discovery. Gology has found a similar advocate in the puson of Hugh miller whose wonderful achievements have done much in nemerling the truths delined to man though similation and those indillely enstamped upon non times works, and the cloud of gloom vecasioned by whom death has search disapproved from the counter amus of an admining would, But we cannot, hur, enconerate the grand and Succession intellectual Achievments which have shed their gernal says upon man's rugged pathway, I each elevating him to a position higher than the one previously occupand, me can but take a hasty flame at his position when dependent upon physical power alone, and that at the

pusent day after a thousand "triumphs of mind over matter have reduced the elements themselve to his power and placed him in a position maner his God, And if the past furnishes, any cuterion by which are may judge the future, the progress of intellectual achievement is destined to be orraved title the difficulties which now have one us with the theatening aspect shall have vanished and the honors of victory be lost amid the flories of a brighter existences.

Commencement Oration of John H. Grabill, Class of 1860
Transcribed by Michael M. Geduldig, November 13, 2006
Edited by Don Sailer, November 2009

#### **Intellectual Achievement**

In the actions of man there may be recognized a secret power whose influence, though for the most part unseen, shapes the destiny and forms the character. Dependent, in part, upon the individual and drawing its vitality from nature, its tendency is either to elevate the mind or sink man below the position assigned by an intelligent Creator. Presenting itself to the choice of the individual, weak and insignificant at first, it is nourished by association until at length acquiring its full sway resistance proves ineffectual and stamping its image upon the character of the man, his words become the proof of its existence and his actions the exponent of its power

But whether it be pure and noble or impure and selfish its nature is seldom entirely concealed. In it may be recognized the birth of intellectual achievement. The secret motives unknown to all but the individual himself, become the foundation of every effort to advance the true theory of knowledge and to make known those few and important principles upon which depend the existence of man and the harmony of the universe itself. But amid all prompting motives there are none possessing so great an inherent strength, none wielding an influence so weighty as the love of truth. Implanted

within the bosom of man by Divinity itself and maintained by all the natural ties and associations which we hold most dear, there is a power, there is a sanctity in love too pure for language too describe, too vast for imagination to conceive. And when man is once subdued by this strong passion, time, talent, energy and even life itself are cast as a willing sacrifice upon the shrine of truth. What noble impulse what more exalted emotion can thrill the breast or fondle with affections than the love of truth? Under its influence the wearied mind drawing sustenance, as it were, from every passing breeze, recognizes in the starry firmament the beauties as well as the utilities of nature's laws, and finds the impress of a Creator upon rocks concealed for centuries from the view of man.

But, while an immense impetus is given by the secret motives the influence of patient persevering effort contributes no little aid to intellectual achievement so that the two grand features of mental development are purity of motive and imagination. Before the combined efforts of the two impediments which have stood with defiance for centuries, have yielded, as the threatening iceberg which defies the howling blasts and roaring tempests of winter modestly

yields to the gentle embraces of the vernal breeze. Genius with its heavenly epithets, though for the moment it may appear clad in all its native beauty, and awaken within the bosom emotions of the purest delight, as the fiery meteor, must sink to be forgotten so soon as its [resplendent?] scintillations are lost amid the surrounding darkness. Genius, it is true, may wander through the realms of imagination gilding the beauties of nature with the touch of her own plastic hand, and combining the scattered and apparently incompatible facts into one harmonious whole, but never can the monuments erected at her shrine equal those built up by the continuing industry of

intellectual effort. For with what self-sacrificing zeal those who appear most eminent among the ancient sages applied themselves to the one great object of inquiry, disregarding public opinion not in that base ignoble sense in which the [illegible] finds a [illegible] for his guilt in his [illegible] [guilt?] in his own bosom, but with that noble Godlike independence in which a man recognizes his own responsibility as disconnected with the opinions and association of others. In such efforts have the natural sciences found

a permanent foundation. Astronomy, the most difficult and yet now the most perfect of all, was dependent upon fluctuating and ill-founded suppositions until by the efforts of him whose name is almost indissolubly connected with familiar to all, after forty years of immense study and meditation [illegible] by no other motive than that of unfolding truth and applying the unwavering faculties of a well disciplined mind to this one great object; the new and almost perfect theory was presented to a world not yet capable of appreciating the truth and beauty of the discovery. Geology has found a similar advocate in the person of Hugh Miller whose wonderful achievements have done much in reconciling the truths delivered to man through revelation and those indelibly enstamped upon nature's works, and the cloud of gloom [illegible] by whose death has surely disappeared from the countenance of an admiring world.

But we cannot, [illegible], enumerate the grand and successive achievements which have shed their genial rays upon man's rugged pathway, each elevating him to a position higher than the one previously occupied. We can but take a hasty glance at his position which dependent upon physical power alone, and that at the

present day after a thousand "triumphs of mind over matter" have reduced the elements themselves to his power and placed him in a position nearer his God. And if the past furnishes any criterion by which we may judge the future, the progress of intellectual achievement is destined to be onward till the difficulties which now hang over us with threatening aspect shall have vanished and the honors of victory be lost amid the glories of a brighter existence.