

In His Words

William Lewis Lockwood

*[From his address to the members of Alpha Chapter, titled "Man,"
January, 1856]*

"I look back over the few short months since our union of kindred hearts and minds was bought forth. The offspring of love and good intent! Many difficulties will beset our path, but like David we must go forth alone to fight the Philistines, and like him we will conquer and shall be the best of old Miami's sons. But in order to become so, we each and every one must struggle upward and onward. Let us strive to be rich and great, not in lands and money, not with the vulgar throng, but rich in mental worth, great among the intellectual...and good, that "thy spirit shall come at times to the dreams of men to settle peace within their souls." Let us spare no labor, nor be sparing of toil. Let us give our whole strength to the work, and endeavor to fill with honor the place where we are. . .when the last grains are dropping from the glass of life. . .and when the green on our graves has mouldered away, some gray warrior sitting at night by the blazing fire shall tell thy deeds to his sons and they shall bless and admire the men of old.

[To Gamma Chapter, September 14, 1857]

As usual, the various secret and literary societies are pulling and tugging after new members. There is quite a large number from which to choose and we are taking it quite cool. The idea of rushing a member in without giving him time to breathe is very bad. Sometimes we can get good boys and then again we get awfully sold. We therefore (our society) have determined to look before we leap.

[To Eta Chapter, September 16, 1857]

As you are rather "young and inexperienced" in the Society you will, I feel confident, excuse me if I make some suggestions. At the commencement of each session, at the first meeting, you will elect all the officers as well as a poet and orator. Then, too, you must look out for good fellows who have just come to College. Be careful to get those who, possessing the requisite mental and social qualities, are expecting to finish their course "with joy and gladness." The perpetuity of the society depends on having such members in it. I would not advise you to have more than four or five in each class.

[To Eta Chapter, October 15, 1857]

You will doubtless create quite a sensation when you first put on the 'dear old cross.' In whatever part of the U. S. you may go you will find no handsomer pins, and I trust and hope that those emblems of purity will be indices of the purity and nobleness of the hearts beneath them. We should endeavor so to raise ourselves that to say of a man, 'He is a Sigma Chi' shall be synonymous with, 'He is a liberally educated, high-minded, pure and noble man.' Such are some of the objects of our Society. The world is in great need of just such men, and let all who go out from our chapters be such men.

[To Gamma Chapter, November 1857]

About a week ago we expelled a member. He was a boy possessed of more than ordinary genius, but he perverted his talent, and sought his company in whiskey shops, and delighted in the caress of depraved women. He forgot what was due to the Sigma Chi, and the Sigma brothers considered him no longer worthy of membership. Better a few of those pure and strong hearted, than a host of degraded and sensual men. There are but six here at present; there will be seven next session, but we are determined to take none who are not talented gentlemen. We have our eyes on one or two, and will determine before long. Though few in numbers, we are very strong in spirit.

[To Lambda Chapter at the time of the close of Alpha Chapter, September 13, 1858]

Enclosed I send you the constitution of the Sigma Chi Fraternity, and a charter constituting you a chapter, under the name and title of 'Indiana Lambda,' and while here, let me say a few words in regard to Alpha Chapter. The Alpha was established in Miami University, June 1855; at that time we numbered in our ranks the talent of the University. This made us proud, and, when we grew few, unfortunately introduced uncongenial elements. This destroyed our unanimity, and now we are gone, at least for the present. Of the purity and uprightness of our motives, I leave you to judge. In our meetings for the past three years, I have spent some of my happiest moments; so happy, so pleasant, that the remembrance of them will always be vivid. When you recruit your ranks, be certain to choose congenial, high-minded talented fellows. Though you may be strong now, take all you can get who have the ring of true metal. 'In time of peace prepare for war; while the evil days come not, prepare for their approach.' With much pleasure I sign myself your Bro. in Sigma Chi.