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"Character and Its Interpretation" by Genevieve Arnold, First UND Commencement: June 13, 1889

Genevieve Arnold

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“Character and Its Interpretation’ was the theme upon which Miss Genevieve Arnold spoke at some length. There is a power felt very keenly in some individuals which is the very centre and heart of beings, the source whence rise living ideas and vital deeds. This power is character. People are known by their actions and they are not always judged with justice. Their acts are taken as indications of the character which prompts them. These signs are not to be relied upon as infallible. We may not perceive all the indications being thus deceived as to the true nature which underlies the misleading exterior. To some degree dress is an indication of custom rather than of character as so often maintained. Small actions and expressions are usually of more value than greater things to readers of character by indications. It is hard to act as assumed character long for nature will step in and assert herself. Reference was made to the different characters so often and easily detected by the expression of the face. Language was said to be used in many connections as having a deep significance for those who have studied the choice of words. Many words which are commonly used as synonyms, are seen to have a widely different meaning when we come to look up the derivation; others which have the same meaning are suitable only for different uses on account of the sound. When a person undergoes a change, his language is an accurate gauge. What is sometimes a puzzle is that on further acquaintance a great deviation from your first opinion formed takes place. Some are undoubtedly not what we have been led to suppose, but appearances are often deceitful. After all a good reader of human nature will come to his art by intuition rather than acquired knowledge. And no amount of skill can save him from an occasional disappointment.”

Grand Forks Herald (evening edition), 13 June 1889, page 4