

## Funeral Oration on the Death of Math

Delivered by Benjamin Perlstein on Ogden Field

May 22, 1906

Woe is me, woe is me, thrice woe is me. Whence are we and why are we? Of what scene the actors and spectators? For what doleful duty are we here assembled? We are convened, afflicted fellow sufferers, to perform the duties which we acknowledge and fulfill to our illustrious dead, to present to our departed excellence an oblation of gratitude for its departure, to describe its virtues and to inscribe them on the urn which is to contain its ashes. And so, if on this sad, this solemn, this most mournful occasion, I should endeavor to move your commiseration it would be doing an injustice to that sensibility which has been so generally and so justly manifested. Far from attempting to excite your emotions I must try and repress my own, and yet, I fear that instead of the language of a public speaker you will hear only the tearful lamentations of a wailing friend. But I will struggle with my bursting heart and endeavor to portray to you the virtues of our departed friends: Church's Mechanics, Campbell's Calculus, and Freshman Pamphlets.

A vision comes to me, over all and above all, methinks I can see the Presiding Genius of Mathematics in despair at the fate of his three children. Behold, there he sits on a throne of hyperboles and arching parabolas circumscribed by spherical fiends and seg-