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## *Expansion, and the English Drama.*

WHILE it is true that colleges are the growth of years and centuries, many have at different stages experienced the benefits and evils arising from radical innovation. The inner histories of Oxford and Cambridge, two representative British institutions, reveal the fact that the processes of reform there, have in the past been, perhaps, a little too gradual. On the other hand, with the accession of President Eliot of Harvard forty-eight years ago, that university experienced an overhauling in all its departments such as it had never known before, and has not known since. The old order of things was swept away and the various departments reorganized on a nineteenth century basis. This reformation was an avowed necessity, but the sudden change called for considerable adaptation, which is, perhaps, not completely effected yet. Probably the outstanding feature, at first a little bewildering, is that elastic range of selection which is granted in the matter of courses.\* Only first year German and English are compulsory in an ordinary course in arts. This system may in the first place be partially justified by reason of the remarkably high standard required for admission. It has been frequently asserted that the freshman who enters the institution referred to, must have a grounding in the various classics in ratio equivalent to that of the average third year student in other prominent American colleges. However just or ridiculous such a vague comparison may be, it might still be thought that the evils of too early specialization would be readily perceptible, and that this tendency in a large college, of undergraduates being permitted to follow up one branch before acquiring some little general data, or before securing an ordered understanding of the one thing itself—would at least be in danger of producing men with intellectual hobbies rather than men with a liberal outlook and broad live interests.

It must be remembered, however, that under such a system there is the possibility of choosing wisely and well, and that it is the more common practise

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\*"If we think of it, all that a University, or final highest School can do for us, is still but what the first School (Univ. of Paris, founded in the 13th century) began doing,—teach us *to read*. It depends on what we read after all manner of professors have done their best for us. The true University of these days is a Collection of Books."

In the light of such abundant reading matter now so readily to hand, these famous sentences of Carlyle obviously assign a distinct duty to the modern college at any rate—that of giving the necessary stimulus for right reading and of instructing men to read with discrimination. In such a case there would seem greater reason than ever for a college proper, being—so to speak—confined to the four walls of a building. Should the following paragraphs seem burdened with an academic emphasis, such emphasis will merit no consideration other than the foregoing note may seem to warrant.—R. L.