

think that if the whole question had to be dealt with *de novo*, a symmetrical scheme of this description would commend itself to general favor. In such a case it would not be necessary for different religious bodies to establish and maintain separate Universities. They would only have to see to the efficiency of their theological halls, and to endow such special professorships as were deemed necessary by them for training their youth for the ministry. It would be practicable for students of every creed to unite in the secular departments, and to attend the same lectures in the Central College. Thus, instead of having as many Universities as there are different denominations, we would have the strength of all combined in one: which might in consequence of the combination, be rendered as complete and efficient as it would be practicable to make it, and the whole circle of the sciences and every branch of study of a non-sectarian character might there be taught by the ablest men of the day. Some such arrangement is what the founders of Queen's contended for. Year after year they struggled to combine the leading religious bodies in one National University. Even six years after Queen's was organized, viz.: in the year 1849, a final but unsuccessful effort was made to unite with "King's," now Toronto University, on a broad, comprehensive basis. It is therefore no fault of the early friends of this Institution that the college system of the Province is as we now find it.

At this stage in the progress of Canada, however, we are called upon to accept not what we would wish but what we have. It would be unwise and inexpedient to uproot the institutions which have grown out of the past condition of things, or to contend for a theory which is obviously impracticable. Instead of struggling for what is beyond our reach, it is infinitely better to accept what we possess, to make the most of what has been secured, and to look hopefully forward to that which is attainable. The time has gone past for seriously discussing whether there should be one University or several Universities in Canada. It would be a step backward to unsettle the public mind with respect to their permanency. Nothing can be more pernicious in horticultural pursuits than constantly disturbing plants at the period of their growth in order to examine their roots. So it is with seats of learning. They are of slow growth, and they take deep root amongst the institutions of the country, and in the feelings and sentiments of the community. How would a proposal be received to break up Oxford and Cambridge, with their forty-two Colleges and Halls, and to substitute universities in every county in England? Such a scheme may have substantial reasons to support it, and, if every thing had to be founded afresh, would meet with many advocates; but Oxford and Cambridge are the growth of some eight centuries. They have played no unimportant part in the history of England, and are almost as firmly established to-day as the August Sovereign on the Throne. Turning to another portion of the British Islands, what would be thought of a proposal to centralize collegiate education in Scotland, and to abolish the old universities of St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow,—institutions which, with one exception, were established by Papal authority and have flourished from a period anterior to the Reformation, and within whose halls intellects have been trained that have left their impress on the Empire? In this Dominion, as in the Mother Country, we must hold on to that which is good, and do our best to build up and give stability to those institutions which are calculated to advance the happiness and prosperity of mankind. May we cherish the idea that Queen's University is one of those institutions, and that it has an important mission to perform on this broad continent during centuries which are to come.

This idea is pregnant with questions, and we are led to

ask ourselves, "What is the proper work of Queen's, and how should it be performed? What should our country expect of this University, and what does our time especially need?" In attempting to answer these questions, I feel that we are called upon to consider not simply what course of education has been pursued in other generations or in other countries in order that we may follow it; but we are called upon to ascertain what is the best for Canada at this particular stage in her history. At various times within the past hundred years University education has been the subject of warm controversy—one party contending that a certain course of study is absolutely necessary, and another school urging that the importance of some other branch of learning is paramount. By one it is claimed that instruction should aim at exercising and training the mental faculties; by another, at imparting positive and useful knowledge. It is held on one side that the Ancient Classics; are indispensable as a means of culture, and of the highest value and importance as sources of information,—that their study best develops the intellectual faculties, and has a strong humanizing tendency. On the other side it is contended that the language and literature of ancient Greece and Rome should, to a large extent, be superseded by the physical sciences, and by other studies which, from a utilitarian point of view, may be deemed more practical. As in other controversial questions which are discussed with great force, it may be that both sides are correct, and yet neither absolutely true under all circumstances. There may be a half-way point where men may settle their differences; or, possibly, a purely classical education may be the best for one college or century or country, but not the most desirable under all conditions. Be that as it may, the question of university education has been exhaustively discussed by some of the ablest scholars and educationists, and if they have been unable to agree as to the course which would best meet the necessities of the age, it might be deemed presumption were a layman like myself to venture a positive opinion one way or the other. My own crude views, which must be taken for what they are worth, are presented suggestively and diffidently, rough-hewn from the mental quarry. They have been in no way subjected to the refining influences which are necessary, and which can be given to them only by learned professors and others who have devoted themselves to the training of youth. I must, therefore, beg of you to hear with every indulgence the views which, with great respect, I venture to offer on this subject.

It will be conceded that the great object of education is the development of the human faculties, by the operation of such influences as will subdue our evil natures, will strengthen our best natures, and will cultivate and enrich the mind, so as to form the best possible individual characters. Its grand aim is to ennoble the propensities and tastes, to strengthen the moral sense, and to fit man to discharge his duties as an intelligent being, in the best manner of which he is capable in the land in which he lives, and in the age in which God has given him life. If this definition be accepted, it is clear that the system of education to be followed at this institution should be that which best meets the conditions laid down,—that the University of Queen's, in order properly to perform its functions, and fulfil the hopes and expectations of its friends, must provide an opportunity for the Canadian youth to acquire a sound intellectual culture, and to enrich his mind with stores of thought, in order that he may be prepared well to perform his part in elevating the condition of his race, and in raising the character of his country in the scale of nations.

We may learn much by inquiring into the condition of education at different times in the history of the human family. Glancing back over the centuries, we reach a period