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THE FIRST FREE UNIVERSITY—A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR UPPER CANADA.

Among the many noble and sublime conceptions, the origin of which may be traced to France, is the grand idea of making *University* Education free—of opening to all members of the State, qualified and disposed to enter, the halls of a University amply endowed out of the resources of the State. This conception, which involves the germ of the world's universal and highest civilization—is ascribed to the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France during the minority of LOUIS XV. M. KILIAN, in his *Tableau Historique de L'Instruction Secondaire en France, depuis les Temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours*, states this eventful fact in the following words :

“Ce fut aussi le duc d'Orléans qui proposa d'établir dans tous les collèges de Paris l'Instruction gratuite. Un arrêt du conseil du 1er Avril 1719 affecta à cet effet, à la Faculté des arts, le vingt-huitième effectif du produit des postes et messageries, évalué alors à environ 140,000 livres, [afterwards much increased] à la condition que les régents desdits collèges n'exigeraient aucuns honoraires de leurs écoliers.”

ROLLIN, in a digression from his account of the establishment of *Posts and Couriers* by the ancient *Persians*, under CYRUS, in mentioning the introduction of the same system into France, gives the following interesting account of the establishment of FREE INSTRUCTION in the several Colleges of the University of Paris :

“France is indebted for it to the University of Paris, which I cannot forbear observing here : I hope the reader will excuse the digression. The University of Paris, being formerly the only one in the kingdom, and having great numbers of scholars resorting to her from all the provinces, and even from the neighbouring kingdoms, did, for their sakes and convenience, establish messengers, whose business was, not only to bring clothes, silver, and gold for the students, but likewise to carry bags of law-proceedings, informations, and inquests ; to conduct all sorts of persons, indifferently, to or from Paris, finding them both horse and diet ; as also to carry letters, parcels, and packets for the public, as well as the University.

“In the University registers of the Four Nations, as they are called, of the faculty of arts, these messengers are often styled *Nuntii volantés*, to signify the great speed and despatch they were obliged to make.

“The state, then, is indebted to the University of Paris for the invention and establishment of these messengers and letter carriers. And it was at her own charge and expense that she erected these offices ; to the satisfaction both of our kings and the public. She has moreover maintained and supported them since the year 1576, against all the various attempts of the farmers, which has cost her immense sums. For there never were any ordinary royal messengers, till Henry III first established them in the year 1576, by his edict of November, appointing them in the same cities as the University had theirs in, and granting them the same rights and privileges as the kings, his predecessors, had granted the messengers of the University.

“The University never had any other fund or support than the profits arising from the post-office. And it is upon the foundation of the same revenue, that king Louis XV, by his decree of council of state, of the 14th of April, 1719, and by his letters patent, bearing the same date, registered in parliament, and in the chamber of accounts, has ordained, *that in all the Colleges of the said University the students shall be taught gratis* ; and has, to that end, for the time to come, appropriated to the University an eight-and-twentieth part of the revenue arising from the general lease or farm of the posts and messengers of France ; which eight-and-twentieth part amounted that year to the sum of 184,000 livres, or thereabouts. (About £9,450.)

“It is not therefore without reason, that the University, to whom this regulation has restored a part of her ancient lustre, reckons Louis XV as a kind of new founder, whose bounty has at length delivered her from the unhappy and shameful necessity of receiving wages for her labours ; which in some measure dishonoured the dignity of her profession, as it was contrary to that noble, disinterested spirit which becomes it. And, indeed, the labours of masters and professors, who instruct others, ought not to be given for nothing ; but neither ought it to be sold. *Nec venire hac beneficium oportet, nec porre.*”

The spirit of this University provision, and the sentiments embodied in the statement of it, would do honour to any age, or any country. Why may it not obtain in Upper Canada ? There can be no more real difficulty in establishing an University, than a Normal School system, to which no class in the community could reasonably object. And is not the endowment ample to maintain the

operations of the University in the highest state of efficiency, without her resorting, as the historian expresses it, to “the unhappy and shameful necessity of receiving wages for her labours ?”—University Education in Upper Canada has been liberally provided for by public endowment ; ought not each individual of the public to have free and unrestricted access to its priceless advantages without money and without price other than intellectual and moral qualifications ?

In Paris, though the examinations on the subjects of the lectures are private, and unrestricted to matriculated students, the lectures themselves are open to the public ; and many a literary traveller, on visiting Paris, has been equally surprised and delighted to find there what is not to be found in any other country, free access to any of the lectures in each of the Faculties of the University, whether of the Sciences or Letters, or Law or Medicine. These lectures are the resort, not merely of University students, but of Scholars, of practical men, of men of leisure, of seekers after knowledge of all ranks and countries, of all professions and employments. Men who have taken the most conspicuous part in public affairs, have first distinguished themselves as Professors in the University ; such as GUIZOT, THIERS, ARAGO, COUSIN, ROSSI, &c. &c.

In the *Faculty of the Sciences*, there are Professors of physical astronomy, differential and integral calculus, algebra, mechanics, descriptive geometry, chemistry, mineralogy, botany, zoology, and comparative physiology. In the *Faculty of Letters*, there are Professors of Greek literature and Latin eloquence, Latin poetry, French eloquence, French literature and poetry, philosophy, history of ancient philosophy, history of modern philosophy, ancient history, modern history, and foreign literature. There are seventeen professors in the *Faculty of the Law*, who lecture on the civil code, civil and criminal procedure and criminal legislation, commercial code, administrative law, French constitutional law, law of nations, Roman law, Pandects, and history of law. The *Faculty of Medicine* comprises professors of anatomy, pathological anatomy, physiology, medical chemistry, medical physics, pharmacy and organic chemistry, hygeian, medical natural history, operations and bandages, external pathology, internal pathology, general pathology therapeutics and materia medica, legal medicine, obstetrics and female diseases, clinical medicine at the hospitals, clinical surgery at the hospitals, and clinical obstetrics.

In addition to these Faculties, there are twenty-seven professors of the *Collège de France*, who give public and gratuitous lectures on the following subjects : astronomy, mathematics, experimental philosophy ; medicine : chemistry ; natural history ; natural law ; history and ethics ; the Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Chinese, Manchou-Tartar, and Sanscrit languages ; Greek literature ; Greek and Latin Philosophy ; Latin eloquence (prose writers) ; Latin poetry ; French literature ; political economy ; archæology ; the Slavonic languages and literature. The salaries of the professors are paid by the state, and vary from 2,000 to 8,000 francs per annum—that is from £50 to £320 Sterling. The professors include the most distinguished literati in France ; and the larger portion of them are engaged in their own professional or literary pursuits,—delivering two or three lectures, and conducting the required examinations of students each week in the University. An hour and a half is prescribed by law for each lecture and examination.

Such is the magnificent provision made by (at least the late) government of France in Paris alone for gratuitous or free instruction in the higher departments of science and literature. It is submitted to the serious consideration of those competent to decide and act, how far corresponding facilities may be provided for Upper Canada by means of our splendid University endowment ? In the French University in which the Faculties referred to are established, no part of the endowment or appropriation is expended in providing residences for professors or boarding halls for the students. The buildings erected are designed for purposes of instruction. We cannot but think that the economical and judicious management and expenditure of our University endowment may provide for Upper Canada the most comprehensive and the freest system of collegiate education on the continent of America.