

THE COLLEGE AND ITS CURRICULUM OF STUDY.

BY PROF. F. R. HALEY, M. A., OF ACADEIA COLLEGE.

Presented at the Educational Institute, St. John, Dec. 28, 1894.

The question which is proposed for discussion is, the place of the college in the present system of education. By the college is meant the historic college as distinct from the technical school, and also distinct, though not as obviously, from the university. Though I have in supreme thought our own college, it will be well to keep in mind that large fellowship in which we stand. Acadia is but one of the younger members of a group of institutions, some in Canada, a larger number in New England, which, while not always retaining the name, still continue to exercise the functions of the college, in distinction from the university.

1. What is the essential and permanent characteristic of the college?

Broadly speaking the colleges originated in a religious impulse. The force behind them was the spirit of consecration, of service, and of sacrifice. Most of them were established to carry on the work of the Christian ministry, and one distinction which they have since had in common, has been the perpetuation in a more or less definite form of the original impulse. Though one need not deny seriousness of aim, or earnestness of endeavor, to other classes of institutions, the history of education, nevertheless, shows us a clear difference in the method and the results of intellectual training, according as you strike, at the beginning, the note of utility, or the religious note. The college differs widely from the professional or technical school, and measurably from the university, in the provision which it allows for the working of the religious element.

As a second characteristic of the college, I may mention the limits of its constituency. The actual area covered by the college is more restricted than that of a university. But a college may be localized by its territory, or by its working idea. This latter distinction may give it a more extended, while it gives it also an assured, constituency. There is an invisible realm over which the college holds sway, by the power of its traditions, the names of its nobler alumni, the ideals which it puts forth, and the work which it is seen to accomplish. None of us could name these outer possessions, but they are a part of the growing inheritance. Students are drawn by affinity. Like begets like. The constituency once established reproduces itself in steadfast loyalty. It is because of this power of the college to protect its life that I do not share the fears entertained by some as to the future of our own institution. Whether the time has come for the severance of the college from denominational ties, whether the Child of Providence has gained sufficient strength to take to its own legs, or whether it is to be abandoned by the denomination, east or west, the mother who gave it birth and promised to love and succor it, I do not pretend to know. Providence will take care of it in either case. Men may come and go, populations and governments change, but the old institution will abide.

But without doubt the distinction characteristic of the college lies in the simplicity of its function, namely to teach. Let us borrow the distinction which Newman has made at this point, though with a large qualification. In his preface to "The Idea of a University" he makes the careful distinction between the diffusion or extension of knowledge and its advancement. The advancement of knowledge he assigns to institutions like the Royal Academy of France, or the British Association; the diffusion or extension of knowledge, to the universities. In the comparative absence of such societies as exist abroad, for the advancement of learning, we have assigned that task largely to the universities; and the teaching function more exclusively to the colleges. Or, to be more exact, we relegate to the secondary schools the early disciplinary work, the formation of habits of study. We carry over something of this disciplinary work to the college and assign to it the further task of expanding and informing. Further than this the college does not presume to go. To the university is committed the work of training for the professions, and the special business of research and investigation. The purpose of the college is to give a liberal culture, the purpose of the university is to produce the specialist, the man who may become a master in his chosen field.

2. What should be the attitude of the college toward the demands of the new education? Is there anything in the subject-matter, or method, or general discipline, introduced by what we term "the newer education" which excludes the college from a share in it? The question of this point is chiefly in regard to the relation of the work of the colleges to the Natural and Physical Sciences. My answer to the question is two-fold, and equally positive in both parts. The college needs the new education both in subject matter and in method, and the new education needs the discipline of the college.

In saying that the college needs the

newer subjects, I am speaking in behalf of what is commonly termed liberal education. If by that term we mean the education which enlarges and disciplines the mind irrespective of the after business or profession, then we cannot omit the training which attends the exact study of nature. Or if by education we mean the introduction to broader ranges of thought, then we cannot leave out the study of nature and of man as a part of nature. "Notwithstanding some of the materialistic effects of this study, it cannot be doubted that it has its own office in humanizing and even spiritualizing the intellect." "I have never been able," says President Eliot, "to find any better answer to the question, What is the chief end of studying nature? Than the answer which the Westminster Catechism gives to the question, What is the chief end of man?—namely, to glorify God and enjoy him forever."

The very practical problem arises, where is the room for the old and the new? The sufficient and only answer to the problem is in the elective system. Under a complete and continuous prescribed course the college must shut out the new or give a smattering of the old and new. The elective system, if properly regulated and consistently applied, gives thoroughness within a reasonable variety of study. But the elective system is not a mere expedient. It holds a principle. One part of the college discipline is the development of the power of intelligent choice. The only question is in regard to the proper time at which the choice is to be made. Each college must answer the question for itself. Much depends upon the rank of the college, its conditions of admission, the funds at its disposal.

Thus, briefly, the need on the part of the college of the newer branches. It is unnecessary for me to argue the other question, whether highly specialized study needs first the liberal training of the college. The most reputable scientists admit this. Candidates for law, medicine, or the ministry, or for the higher university degrees, need first of all the breadth of culture which the college course affords. "One can easily make a specialist out of a man," says a recent writer, "but it is a far more difficult matter to make men out of some specialists." The claim of the college is that the theoretical knowledge of the sciences, properly related to other kinds of theoretical knowledge, should precede the specialized application for the sciences. These scientific courses are mainly theoretical. The work of the laboratory is not the work of the workshop. The college should attempt to make some connection with mechanical and electrical engineering, but it assumes to make no more immediate connection with these than it does with the practice of law or medicine, or with the ministry. The modern college aims to make proper connection with every kind of specialized work, but not to do that work.

Now this very simple and very great function of the college is at present confused, and needlessly confused, by the variety of degrees which it confers. Here in the Maritime Provinces we find a number of colleges maintaining parallel courses leading to different degrees. Some of the colleges reserve the B. A. degree for the course that contains the Classics, that is to say, both Greek and Latin, in something like the old proportions; other colleges grant the same degree for a course containing French and German instead of Greek; while others afford in addition to the old Aristotelian courses leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Letters, or the like. As a practical way of dealing with a question in regard to which men have been, and are still, sharply divided, this multiplication of degrees has much to commend it. On the other hand one cannot help feeling that it is the policy of a transition period. The question will continually return until it is finally answered. Do these parallel courses afford a liberal education, or do they not? If they do, why is it necessary to multiply degrees? If they do not, why should our colleges encourage men by the conferring of degrees, to spend their time upon courses presumably believed to be less profitable? After some discussion of the problem at Acadia, we have assumed the following attitude as our judgment, the proper position to hold at the present time. We conceive of ourselves as offering a liberal or college education. Inasmuch as the B. A. degree is the generally accepted symbol of a liberal education, we give that degree, and that degree only, for our college course. While many of us are not yet ready to say that a man can be considered liberally educated who does not know something of the classic language of Greece and Rome, others maintain that the study of modern languages is equally serviceable. In a spirit of compromise we permit our students to make an election between Greek and the modern languages, while we grant the one degree for either of the two courses of study. We still hold to the old degree as the symbol of a liberal education while we practically admit that we have changed to some extent our conception of a liberal education. I will not pause to argue the matter but I

beg to express the conviction that the time will come when the legitimate work of our Provincial colleges will be represented by one degree. Opinions will gradually become so equalized in respect to the relative value of the different studies which find place in the college curriculum that it will be acknowledged that our colleges have but one standard and represents through its degree a single and complete unit in education.

In order to encourage continued study during the year immediately following graduation, the college is justified in granting the degree of M. A., to students who give evidence of having done the equivalent of a year's graduate study. Beyond this the college has no right to go. It owes to its undergraduates the full expenditure of its income and the full time of its professors. It is the duty of the college to drive away graduates who desire a prolonged course of systematic instruction, to the institutions which make graduate study their main concern.

3. What, lastly and briefly, should be the future policy of these Maritime institutions?

In Germany, where we find the university system in its perfection, the universities assume the broad foundation which our colleges give. The elective work of the university presupposes the training of the gymnasium, the course of which covers about the same ground as that of the ordinary American or Canadian college. During the ten or fifteen years following 1870 it seems to have been a pedagogical dream of the people in the United States to make all their preparatory schools into German gymnasia, by advancing the college requirements. The American university was to be created out of the American college, by treating the same with a sort of jack-saw process from beneath, and with the elective system from above. Of late there seems to be a disposition among many of the colleges to give up the race for university honors, and they have settled down to the conclusion that to ape the university and to try to spread over the whole field of education, or to be jealous of the university and to set up as its rival, is equally silly and absurd. Now that we have in the United States eight or ten great institutions, and nearer home our own McGill and Toronto, all quickly developing into splendid universities, our colleges must be content to take a second place in the educational world. The proper policy is to accept with modesty and self-respect this new position. We cannot of course, assume the right to tell our sister institutions in which direction their duty lies. Poverty at present precludes the balance of power among us. What the next twenty-five years may bring forth, no one can pretend to say. But this seems clear. If an institution is able to do one sort of work well, it ought to confine itself to that work. A small college, as I conceive of it, can do college work as well as a large one. Sometimes it may do it even better. Says President Hyde of Bowdoin, "For combining sound scholarship with solid character, for uniting the pursuit of learning with the mission which no change of educational conditions can take away, and a policy which no sentiment of vanity should be permitted to turn aside."

THE DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGE. Does it exist Primarily as a Training-School for Ministers?

BY H. C. CREED, M. A., FREDERICTON.

Presented at the Educational Institute, St. John, Dec. 27, 1894.

In the very brief time at my disposal it is impossible for me to prepare a paper at all worthy of such an occasion as this. Had there been more time at command, it might have been a more fitting thing to adopt a broader theme. The Denominational College—its Claims and Tendencies—under which title one could have discussed some what fully, the frequently alleged needlessness and narrowness of the so-called "sectarian" schools of learning. One might have undertaken to show, as there is perhaps need of showing repeatedly, that an academy or a college supported and controlled by an evangelical Christian body is a safer and better place for young men and women to spend the years of student life, than is a similar institution maintained by the state. Under existing circumstances, however, I shall confine myself mainly to the question stated in the title.

It may perhaps be said that this is not a "live" question—that every body now would answer it in the negative. But a tour of inquiry among the ordinary members of the majority of our churches would soon dispel this illusion. In the cities and towns, the true work and aim of a college, be it secular or denominational, are probably much better understood now than was the case thirty years ago. But in the rural districts, opinions, like customs, do not change so rapidly, so that we should certainly find many intelligent persons who would give an affirmative answer to the question.

Let us consider the matter with special reference to our own college. Every now and then, at our annual gatherings and elsewhere we hear the idea expressed in some form or other, that Acadia University was founded, and still exists, mainly as an agency for ministerial education. In fact, it appears to be

generally accepted, even among our prominent men who appear on educational platforms, that Horton Academy, the old Fredericton Seminary, and Acadia College were originally destined for "schools of the prophets," and that the churches would never have been asked to give money and material for their building and maintenance, merely as means of general education. What did we hear at our Maritime Convention last August? In his admirable paper entitled "Has Acadia College still a mission?" the scholarly pastor of a metropolitan church said, "The Academy and College sprang out of a desire to furnish well equipped preachers and pastors." (M. and V., Oct. 17.) How strongly this was believed, and how prominently advanced, when we were younger, will be made clear by recalling a discussion in the columns of our Baptist papers in the year 1873. The leading topic was a proposal to found a Baptist theological seminary within our borders. One of the St. John daily newspapers, under date of July 10th in that year, drawing inferences apparently from the editorial-utterances of the Christian Visitor made the following statement:—

"The Baptists, now that it has been decided to dispose of the Seminary at Fredericton, are turning their attention to the proposed endowment of Acadia college. A theological college for the ministry of the Maritime Provinces is felt to be a necessity."

Whether this was intended to mean that Acadia College as a school for training Baptist ministers was felt to be a necessity and should be well endowed; or whether the meaning was that, in addition to endowing Acadia, a theological college should be founded, it may not be easy now to decide. The Christian Visitor had said editorially,—"The Baptists of New Brunswick have to do their full share in the establishment of a first class theological institute for the Baptist ministry of the Maritime Provinces. Where this shall be located is a question not yet decided, but on all hands it is felt that such an institution is a necessity."

About the same time there appeared in that paper the first of a series of nine articles on "Our Educational Institutions," from the pen of the writer of the present paper, over the signature "H." These were followed, in the ensuing winter and spring, by four articles bearing the title, "Acadia College—Thoughts and Facts," over the signature "Luke." My reasons for writing anonymously at that time have long since passed away; and as parts of those letters, in which I can now see nothing to be retracted or regretted, dealt with the very question I have undertaken to answer today, I may be pardoned for making use of them in this sadly hurried paper.

The editor of the Visitor in the course of the discussion, employed the following language:—"The application to the churches for means to erect and sustain—1st. The Wolfeville Seminary; 2nd. The Fredericton Academy; 3rd. Acadia College; has been based, from the beginning to the present hour, upon the idea that theological training for our ministry is a necessity, and that such a training should be furnished at home."

Again—in another article— "Will Acadia be satisfied with simply instructing her ministerial students in the several branches of secular education, and then send them abroad for theological training? If so, as a denominational agency, so far as these provinces are concerned, it is comparatively needless. What our churches need especially is a home-trained ministry, and if Acadia College will not give such a ministry, then it should be pushed to the world that it is simply a secular institution, having no special claim upon the benevolent action of our people. But the moment it dwindle to that point, it loses the sympathy of our churches, and death struggles must follow. If hold its place today in the affections of our people purely upon the ground that it is a school for our young men called of God to the ministry."

Again—later—"No one ever dreamed of asking money from our churches to build institutions for the purpose of educating young men for the professions of the law or of medicine, or for the pursuits of agriculture or of commerce, or simply to be teachers in the primary or higher schools. . . . It is true, as H. indicates, that Acadia has done an excellent work in training men outside of the ministry; and many of these men are exerting a most wholesome influence in denominational work; but this is collateral and secondary. While the primary purpose was to educate ministers for the home and foreign field, it was good policy to educate as many others as possible. . . . The point we wish to make is this (and we know whereof we affirm)—that the first and grand object of our seminaries and colleges was the education of young men for the ministry; and as a cultivated and improved ministry would cultivate and improve our churches, therefore the churches should be called upon to contribute to this work."

"We are quite as glad as H. can possibly be to recognize all the good that Acadia has done in training men for secular calling. In this respect the one half has never been told; but shut up the theological department, and you write Ichabod upon its walls. 'The glory has departed.'"

Now the opinions thus strongly and decidedly expressed, regarding the main purpose of the "fathers and founders," of our college, no doubt carried much weight and were at the time very generally accepted as correct. But the "young man" referred to ventured to assert the contrary, and to bring forward documentary evidence. "For what purpose," he asked, "was the college established?"

Not only, not chiefly, to make ministers, but to educate our people. 'The fathers' said, 'we were provided for the education of the generations growing up around them and to come after them. And in addition to furnishing the means of obtaining a liberal culture accessible to all, they desired to make some provision for the special training of candidates for the ministry. Hear what the Directors of the Nova Scotia Baptist Education Society said, in 1844:—

"Some years since, a number of individuals residing in the colony of Nova Scotia, viewing with deep concern the great want of sound and practical education in that and the neighboring provinces, formed a society for the extension of education throughout the province, with special adaptation to the circumstances of the people and to the future pursuits of their youth. With this object in view, they established an institution for affording instruction in the more advanced branches of learning, at Horton, in the midst of the rural population, and with charges so low that any class might enjoy its benefits. This seminary . . . having succeeded beyond their most sanguine hopes, and having excited a general and growing interest on the subject of education, it was deemed necessary to establish a college or university in addition to the academy." [The document then briefly recites the circumstances of the founding and naming of the college, and continues as follows:] "These infant seminaries, among the numerous advantages of a moral and intellectual nature which they are calculated to impart to the present and future generations, are now looked to by the Baptists in these Lower Colonies, as the great means of raising up a well educated ministry to meet the spiritual wants of our people, which shall place them on an equal footing with our brethren of every other denomination, and shall also foster the exalted desires already kindled, of sending forth missionaries to convert the heathen to God, in which noble enterprise we are just now embarking. We trust that they will also operate as a means the most effectual in these provinces, of stemming the floods of superstitution and error that appear at present upon our gaining ground in different parts of Christendom."

"Do not these words," continued H., "so pertinent to our present circumstances, show that the grand aim of the 'fathers and founders' was to raise an academy and a college, where Religion should ever hold her place, to sanctify the fountain of knowledge, and nurture men both wise and good? Not a theological seminary, but a university, with a theological department in connection, was the gift they left us."

Surely, if Acadia college was designed primarily and chiefly to equip men for the pulpit, the fact should appear unmistakably in the charter and in the records of the time. No suggestion of it is to be found in the statement from which the foregoing extracts were taken, as published by the Director's within six years after the founding of the college, and republished by order of the Baptist convention about seven years later. On the other hand, "raising up a well educated ministry," was expressed in the charter to be only one "among the numerous advantages" which the college was expected to "impart." Moreover, the Act of Incorporation, passed March 27, 1840, and amended, in so far as the name was concerned, March 29, 1841—which may be regarded as the college charter, contains no hint that the "collegiate institution" therein mentioned was to be other than an "arts" college in the ordinary sense of the term. Its claim was, as set forth in the preamble, that it was expected to be "of public benefit by affording the means of education in the higher branches of classical and scientific literature to the youth of the country, on sound, moral and religious principles." Will it be urged that the real object and aim of the institution—that of making Baptist ministers—was herein concealed or shrewdly kept out of sight? For the honor of the departed worthies who so nobly built not for themselves—

"(Sic vos non vobis edificatis, patres) let us spur such an unworthy insinuation. But we have yet other evidence on the point in question. The college was an outgrowth of the academy, or of the idea from which originated the Nova Scotia Baptist Education Society, the parent of both academy and college. Whatever thought took shape in the former, the same thought was "materialized" in the latter. And what did the Education Society say in its prospectus, published in 1828?—"That a principal object to be observed in the management of the institution being to adapt the course of study [Was it to the needs of young men purposed to devote themselves to the ministry of the gospel?—no the state or society, and the wants of the people, and to place the means of instruction as much as possible within the reach of all persons, it is considered primarily necessary to attend to those branches of education which are of more general use, at the same time that a wider range of literary acquirements shall be open to those who may have the ability to seek them, or to whose prospects in life they may be more suitably adapted. It is also considered desirable that, as far as may be practicable persons wishing to qualify themselves for [Ah! Now we shall have it!—"the Christian ministry"]—the various callings of life, should have opportunity to receive instruction at their leisure seasons of the year, in the particular branches of study more immediately requisite for their respective objects."

Throughout the whole prospectus not one word is to be found concerning theology or preparation for the ministry, except a short section relating to the theological department.

Lastly let us look for evidence as to the grand thought which inspired the fathers to erect and build, in that valuable volume left us by the venerable Dr. Bill—the last of the fathers. If anywhere we can find proof that their main purpose was that which has been so constantly alleged, surely it will be in Dr. Bill's chapter entitled "The Educational Policy of the Baptists fought out." But not even there shall we discover an intimation of any aim less broad than that the Baptist people should, in the author's words, "erect a college upon a perfectly free basis, but at the same time so far under their own control as to ensure to their sons collegiate advantages and honors equal to those enjoyed by other denominations."

Going back to a slightly earlier date, I find that the faculty of the college, in their report presented to the Board of Governors in 1870, used the following language:—"The proposed plan [that they should undertake more work in the Theological Department] would be attended with serious difficulties in practice. There will be danger of so introducing theological studies into the college course as to change the character of the college. While other institutions are striving to improve their literary character, it will not do for us to allow our rivals to say that Acadia has become simply a Theological Hall. The college, in the broad sense of the term, was the original design here; and all will admit that it will not be wise to narrow the plan."

This report was read to Convention, and adopted by the body. If, notwithstanding all this positive and negative evidence, my contention regarding our own college can still be disproved, I leave it for others to declare the reasons why the truth was so effectually kept out of sight. And on the other hand, if my contention as to Acadia's first and true raison d'etre is correct, then I leave to others to point out the origin of the contrary opinion which all along has too commonly prevailed.

I have now only time to clip a few paragraphs from the series of letters already mentioned, and therewith to close.

A College, as such, does not aim to train men for any particular profession or business, but rather to educate them—to discipline and inform their minds, to develop their mental faculties, to cultivate their perceptions—in short, to make better men of them. As regards the regular course of study in College, it matters little or nothing whether the student intends to be a farmer, a merchant, a lawyer, or a preacher. When the young B. A. goes forth with his diploma, he goes not trained for one particular calling, but better qualified to enter upon the duties of any. He still requires special instruction, which the College does not give him.

For example, a collegiate course is an inestimable advantage to the teacher, since it imparts much valuable and varied information, and furnishes the student with a regular course of study in College, it matters little or nothing whether the student intends to be a farmer, a merchant, a lawyer, or a preacher. When the young B. A. goes forth with his diploma, he goes not trained for one particular calling, but better qualified to enter upon the duties of any. He still requires special instruction, which the College does not give him.

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