

a turning point in the history of our National University you stood true to your obligations—that you did all that lay in your power to strengthen her foundations, to enlarge her sphere of usefulness, and to hand her down to the children as the Alma Mater to be by them loved and preserved as shall now be done by us.

### A WORD FROM MCGILL.

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**I** BELIEVE in students' magazines, just as I believe in students' debating societies. They are a pretty fair index of the undergraduate life of a University. If a competent commission could examine and compare them it would be in a position to issue a very interesting report. It is a truism to say that a University cannot exist without students. Professors no more constitute a University than the clergy constitute the Church. And while the first duty of the students is to work at their studies—and not to be afraid, as a rule, of overworking themselves—it is well for them to look beyond their text books and cultivate current interests. This does not necessarily mean party politics. The elections are over, and no one need "wear a button" now for either side. I don't say "no one need care a button,"—the reference is to that one hundred dollar fine during election time! There are current interests outside politics, and in these days when people insist on the need for "vitally relating the University to life," such interests are more readily discoverable than they used to be. I have heard of colleges where it was forbidden to discuss certain topics, on the ground, I presume, that the undergraduate body might become unduly excited. On the other hand, I turn to the Catalogue (we used to say Calendar in the old world, and I am glad I may still do so in Canada) of Harvard University, where a consideration of the topics enumerated on pp. 412-425 as having engaged the attention of the University out of class hours would be enough to remind anyone that the education of students does not go forward exclusively in lecture rooms. There are more things in heaven and earth than can possibly be included in even the most elastic of curricula!

The freedom with which experiments are tried on the University curriculum on this continent seems to me one of the great points of contrast between the Old World and the New. Of the American University it may be said, as of Keats' nightingale, that "no hungry generations tread it down." In the old country, University institutions are subjected to a process of parliamentary revision periodically, every quarter of a century or thereabout. The commissioners appointed under the Scottish Universities Act of 1889 issued their report only a couple of months ago. It is to me a very precious document, though that is another story! On this continent we mend our Universities as we go along. In most of them, changes can be introduced, improvements effected and extensions secured with the minimum amount of red tape and friction. There are many who think that in a young country like Canada, University education is in danger of being overdone, and it seems to me that there might be some ground for this apprehension if the training which our Universities offer were conducted exclusively on traditional and even mediæval lines. But it is no longer the sole business of a University to turn out ministers and lawyers and doctors. Their usefulness to the community at large lies in the fact that in all departments of human activity the conditions of modern life require a higher training now than formerly. That is ample justification for including in the modern University program studies of practical and commercial importance, alongside of

academic and literary subjects. The professional needs in which the most ancient Universities had their origin are extended now to cover the requirements of the engineer, the banker, the chemical technologist, the agriculturist, the railway man and the steamship owner. The successful man of business often scoffs at the notion that Universities could teach him anything that would help him, or such as him, in actual contact with affairs. There is no theory, he says, in such matters, and everything must be learned by practice, even at the price of costly mistakes. But he himself is always applying some theory to practice, even though it may be unconsciously, and we must take account of the fact that from Birmingham to California the cry is rising for including in the organization of a University a "Faculty of Commerce and Industry," dealing mainly with economics, history, commercial and political geography, physical science, modern languages and commercial law. It is not book-keeping or type-writing, and generally the practice of the counting-room that is required, but a knowledge of the nature and composition of the great forces which govern and control the commerce of the world, and certainly the more such teaching is developed in our Universities the less will the danger be of their becoming the "nursing-mothers of an academic proletariat." The only proviso or *caveat* that needs to be made in connection with such organized teaching is that Universities must insist on precisely the same amount of preparation for admission as in other departments. Otherwise our schools will fall even below their present level of achievement, and we should be in danger of increasing the number of illiterate specialists.

The University of Toronto has always occupied a strong place in some of the departments to which reference has just been made. Her school of economic and political science is still the envy of her sister in the east, whose energies have till now been mainly occupied in overtaking the demands of applied science—science as applied to material construction. This made us wonder all the more how it should have happened that when a modest announcement was made at McGill to the effect that we proposed to imitate the example of Toronto, and introduce teaching in economics and kindred subjects—teaching such as would be of service to ordinary citizens as well as to journalists and publicists generally—we had at once an application from Toronto in which the offer was made to instruct the youth of Montreal in type-writing, book-keeping, commercial practice, and all the other well known features of the "business college." But perhaps my pen is running on too fast. We are always glad to hear from Toronto at McGill. I fervently believe that the more inter-communication, the greater degree of reciprocity there can be between us, the better for the country at large. We ought always to remember that here in Canada we are helping in the building up of a nation, not of a mere conglomeration of provinces. Imperial unity is a great deal, but it must not be set above national unity. That sentiment will, I hope, commend itself to the undergraduates of Toronto, whose cosmopolitan spirit I have sometimes had occasion to admire. I have dined with them in all the pomp and ceremony of a "University dinner," and I have met and conversed with them working their way to Europe in charge of the cattle on board an Atlantic liner. I mean they were in charge, not I; which was probably best for the cattle! There is nothing like travel for eliminating all trace of what is narrow and local, and provincial, and I should like to see some of our great steamship lines making it easier than it is at present for some of our students to crown their University career by a visit to the motherland. Some of us who are no longer students have not forgotten our *Wanderjahr*!