

THE CHAIR OF PHILOSOPHY AT T. U. C.

THERE is quite a stir amongst the graduates of Toronto University over the appointment of a successor to Dr. Young. One candidate for the vacant Chair is Mr. Hume, a distinguished graduate of the University, a pupil of the deceased Professor, whose vacant seat he is anxious to fill. Mr. Hume is unknown to us, but his testimonials predict a brilliant career, and his modest appeal for sympathy in this effort, and manly confession that he has yet much to learn, all point hopefully to a life honorable to his native land.

It is, however, affirmed that Dr. Caven and Dr. Sheraton of Wycliffe College object to Mr. Hume, as they, most naturally, in both cases, strongly desire to see a thorough-bred Presbyterian in the position. The *Toronto World* rebukes these Principals in sharp terms as being *neither of them scholars of any note*.

We have no wish, neither have we any reason to speak disparagingly of the attainments, or in any way disrespectfully of, so amiable a divine as Dr. Caven. Of his companion in this indictment we must however say, that, if he ever has studied philosophy he has also studied the art of concealing his acquaintance with this branch of learning, as anything more utterly contrary to philosophical principles, or devoid of philosophical culture, or lacking in philosophical spirit than are his peculiar religious opinions and methods of advocacy could not well be conceived. It is not possible to believe that any man has had even an elementary training in philosophy who is so manifestly and even avowedly, incapable of grasping the teaching of every day life as to the relation of the imagination to the religious faculty, who indeed makes it an article of his narrow creed, that symbolism is an extraneous mental growth which the knife of his party agitation will be able to cut off from all Churchmen, like a wart!

As a negative definition it would be accurate to say that an *ecclesiastical partisan*, such as is the lesser of the Principals named, is one who never had any training in philosophy. Therefore, such an one, whatever his official position, is woefully out of place as a judge of candidates for the Professorship of Philosophy, as, almost to a certainty, whoever is approved by him will be a reproach and a scandal to the Chair.

The importance of this appointment to the educational life of the Province cannot be overrated. A man may be stuffed as full as a Strasbourggoose with classics and mathematics and yet be an intellectual nonentity. His mental horizon, if his accomplishments go no further, is as limited as a rustic's, and his brain sterile and its life and motions uninteresting and powerless, save in the realm of pedagogy.

The study of philosophy produces the truest culture, it is at once plough and harrow and seed drill and seed to the mental soil. To select then a teacher of so important a branch of learning chiefly because he belongs to a

certain sect, or holds certain theological "views" favored by a certain school, would be treason to the intellectual interests of Canada. We trust the best man will win this prize, if prize it be, that is, one thoroughly fitted by special culture, and tastes, and teaching skill, and persistently studious habits, to teach all that is implied in the words, "mental and moral philosophy." If a Canadian is at all worthy we shall hail his appointment with great satisfaction.

A QUESTION IN ETHICS.

THE extravagant eulogies passed upon a person who recently died, because he left a large amount to various benevolent and religious institutions, suggests the question as to what particular virtue was exercised in making such a posthumous disposition of property? The public have been informed that this deed, the giving of a large sum of money by a Will to good objects, raised the Will maker to the highest pinnacle of religious "nobility." Indeed language seems to have failed these eulogists in depicting the moral grandeur and the spiritual elevation of the act of so disposing of money after the death of the owner. Terms of praise that would be alone justified by such a life as John Howard's, or Father Damien's, or many now being lived by our own clergy were poured out like a flood in the presence of the lifeless remains of the man who left money by his Will to certain charities and religious "causes." It seems ungracious to question the wisdom and truth of such eulogies, but they were so utterly contrary to Christian teaching, so highly calculated to work untold mischief, especially amongst young men, that we must expose the folly and untruthfulness of praises so inspired. What then are the facts? Here was a person who inherited a large fortune, to that he added by thrift almost an equal sum, such a sum as to the majority of even business men would be a very handsome result of a life of work and saving. He had no domestic ties, no relatives who were not rich, even more so than himself, no social tastes, inherited or acquired, that are so expensive to gratify, he was only a mortal, his money must be left behind at death, and to leave it to wealthy connections could afford no satisfaction. Seeing then, that it must be parted with, what is there so colossal in virtue, in leaving this wealth to public institutions of a benevolent, or religious character?

The Testator, in the very nature of things, never could know the difference between the sense of owning this money and of missing it, he died with his hand, as it were, grasping his gold, and of its passing away from his grasp he was never conscious. Yet, because he willed that after this money had so passed away by his disease, it should go to benevolent and religious objects, he was eulogised as though he had risen to a sublime height of self-sacrifice! The world was told in plain terms that no one need imagine he could ever hope to reach that eminence unless he died worth a large fortune and left it by Will to

similar purposes! Heaven's highest seat was said to be reserved for such as left wealth to good institutions, and the Christian who did not die rich must, it was inferred, be content to act as a mere scavenger of the streets of the golden city, while Dives, who endowed a College, &c., looked on from his splendid exaltation!

Such teaching seems to us, judging from a Biblical standpoint, to be downright heathenism. The natural conclusion a young man will come to from it will be that he must give up his whole soul and mind and strength to the making of money. He must shun all the ways of social life wherein temptations abound to spend money in hospitality, in works of art, in the encouragement of the higher life of the nation. He must lead the life of a narrow minded, coarse grained, sordid, grovelling miser until in or near old age he has acquired large means, and cut off from himself all domestic ties that demand testamentary remembrance. Then he must make a Will leaving large gifts to charitable institutions, and after death he will be pronounced one of the most exalted beings that ever adorned humanity or religion!

Compare all this horrible pandering to Mammon with the Master's teaching as to the relation of the Widow's Mite to the great gifts placed alongside hers in the Treasury,—they are mutually destructive. Either Christ's teaching in that incident is mere nonsense, the drivel of an enthusiastic sentimentalist, or the eulogies on posthumous generosity, to which we allude, were directly antagonistic to the wisdom of the Great Teacher.

One who heard those eulogies, in early manhood, at the threshold of a most promising career, for he had large gifts, cast all his worldly hopes aside to devote his life to personal visitations of the most wretched social outcasts. He had no fortune, his poverty was keenly felt, but he made the sacrifice of a life for his fellow men. While through long, long, years, he who was so eulogised for a Will, was sacrificing everything, himself as a human being included, to the mere task of adding dollar to dollar, up to the time of grey hairs, the other led a humble life of devotion to the ministering of help and consolation. The one will die, and not a whisper be heard, yet in the Eternal world there will be for this obscure, this poor worker, this Lazarus of love, a crown of glory that will infinitely surpass that of the wealthy Dives, who gave—what death had already snatched from his power!

There are thousands and tens of thousands of our clergy incomparably higher in Heaven's valuation roll than wealthy testators. Look too at our Sisters of Mercy and of Service, who minister to the sick in stricken homes and at Hospital bedsides. Their eulogy is not rung out before crowded and excited audiences in sensational scenes, but there is a silent eloquence that speaks beyond the power of words.

We deny also that the spirit manifested by two gifts to Colleges, especially the very large one to a sectarian institution, can in any sense

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