

dares to use its power now is the time to use it. The country is ripe for this question, barring the narrow prejudices of denominations and sects. Neither University College nor the denominational colleges can hope to be thoroughly qualified and equipped for higher teaching under the present system." After referring to the spirit in which the discussion had been carried on, and to the objection that the instruction in the State University would be godless—which he dismissed as a *non sequitur*—the Dr. continued:—"It is said that private munificence will fail if not drawn out by denominations. I believe the opposite will be the case. A man wishing to leave a bequest which will perpetuate his name will naturally select for endowment an institution which is likely to be permanent. If he has \$100,000 to give he will leave it to the State University, because it will last as long as the State. We have no guarantee of permanence in a denominational institution. It is the poverty of the people which calls for this federation. We have not in this country numerous millionaires ready to endow seats of learning as in other lands. As to the taxation objection, if we do not pay taxes for colleges and professors we shall have to pay them for gaols and policemen. The denominational colleges, I think, should be left to educate for the pulpit. The means of members of the churches should not be squandered to educate men in arts and sciences. If all of their means were devoted to educating students for the pulpit they would not have enough." As Dr. Wild was a hard worker for Albert College—a denominational institution—his testimony on this point is of value. In this case, as in many others, Dr. Wild has got hold of the right idea.

#### THE CURRICULUM.

The revision of the Curriculum of studies, which is now being made by the Senate, demands the most earnest consideration from all graduates and undergraduates of the University. The nature of its Curriculum is one of the most important agencies in determining the character of the influence which our University will exert upon the embryotic Canadian nation. The other main agencies are the nature of the teaching which the students receive and the nature of their examinations. To some extent these three agencies act independently, but in a very large degree they limit and determine one another. Both professors and examiners are necessarily largely guided in their work by the Curriculum; if it is seriously defective, the results of their work will also be so to a somewhat corresponding degree. Hence it is of the greatest importance in relation to the intellectual welfare and progress of our country that all matters pertaining to the University Curriculum should receive the widest and most thorough discussion by the whole body of the Alumni. Such weighty questions should not be left to the deliberation of the Senate alone, much less to a small committee of that body. At all events the Senate should not pronounce finally upon the question until, after having given notice of their intentions, a sufficient time had elapsed to allow a full discussion of the whole position. Whether the Senate then chose to adopt or to reject the suggestions from outside graduates, this much is sure that they would be much more likely to arrive at a safe conclusion than if no opportunity had been given for a general discussion.

The truth of this observation may appear more obvious from the following considerations. It is held to be advisable, and perhaps rightly so, that a large proportion of the members of the Senate should be men of mature views—"men of experience" as it is termed. It is then taken for granted that this experience, implying special wisdom in its possessors, will enable them to arrive at correct conclusions on all matters which may be brought before them as a corporate body. Yet, right here lurks a very dangerous fallacy. For the question at once arises, Is their experience of the kind suited to the particular case under consideration? Will twenty years experience as a physician, for example, enable a member of the Senate to decide more intelligently what authors should be added or retained on an English course in a revised curriculum? It may be said that this difficulty is obviated by apportioning the several sections of the work to committees of specialists. But here another and even more serious danger appears. For the specialists, who are most frequently chosen in such cases and whose views have most

weight with the Senate, are men whose opinions on most subjects have long ago crystallized and who, (with all due respect be it spoken), are not competent to pronounce upon the educational value of what may in reality be the most important subjects of the time. Especially is this true in the departments of Political and of Natural Science and Modern Languages, in the domains of which the most extraordinary progress has been made during the last twenty years. Those whose university education ended before this period, and who have not strenuously exerted themselves to keep abreast of the swiftly flowing current of thought since then, are necessarily unable to estimate properly the import of recent discoveries and investigations in those subjects. Moreover, opposition of a similar origin is sure to present itself whenever a proposal is made to introduce a new subject of study or to establish a new course. Thus it has usually happened that intellectual people of the outside world have become almost tired of talking of a subject before it is heard of within the walls of a college, except in the mouths of the undergraduates and the younger graduates. Social science in its various phases is a subject quite to the point. Never before in the world's history has such intense interest been shown in social and economic questions, and yet it is only in a comparative few of the most progressive colleges that a chair has been established in this department of knowledge. In fact, in such cases chairs are rarely established until the aforesaid undergraduates, who felt the need of them most keenly, have come to have the controlling power of the college in their own hands.

In spite, however, of the prejudicial influences which the excessively conservative character of the Senate necessarily brings into operation, it is probable that the construction of the Curriculum should rest mainly and finally with them. The interests of liberal education will be safer in their hands than in those of a purely democratic body. But as the Senate itself is not at all infallible, it should (while not yielding to public opinion always) yet pay much more attention to it than has been hitherto done, especially when that opinion has been repeatedly and definitely expressed. The Senate should also take the university public more into their confidence by publishing the various reports of the Board of Arts studies and asking for discussion and suggestions thereon. The columns of THE VARSITY will always be open to matter of this nature, and we certainly know of nothing which would be more interesting reading to a majority of our subscribers.

#### AN AMERICAN VIEW OF CANADIAN LITERATURE.

Although but of recent origin, the *Current* of Chicago has attained a wide circulation and a somewhat influential position among the weekly journals of the United States. It appears to be the aim of its managers to combine in it the qualities of the literary magazine and the political review. It was introduced to the Canadian public by Mr. Goldwin Smith in the *Week*, with much flourishing of trumpets, and echoes of its greatness and glory have been heard in the halls of University College. In fact, there were those who would have us believe that the were of the great ones of the earth. But a more moderate estimate of the character of this periodical is beginning to prevail. A few months since that ablest of critical journals, the *Literary World*, ridiculed, and very properly, we think, the pretentious assertion of the *Current* that E. P. Roe is the greatest of American novelists. The "Bystander" has of late "dropped" the *Current* entirely, and the editor of the *Week* adjures by it no longer. A most amusing instance of the application of Chicago commercial methods to literature was the claim recently made by the *Current* of superiority over either Harper's or the *Century* magazine,—that claim being based mainly upon the number of words which each magazine printed during the past year! Shades of Jeffrey and Christopher North, truly these be critics! Apart, however, from its critical pretensions, the *Current* is in general a most readable journal. This is to some extent due to the excellence of its mechanical execution. Its contents are most tastefully arranged and printed, and the beauty of its pages is enhanced by fac-similies of the autographs of its contributors. Then, as it draws its contributions from a very wide field and pays reasonably for them, it is evident that many productions of first-class literary merit will appear in its columns during the course of a year. Hence when the publishers announced some weeks since that the issue of the *Current* for the 10th of January would present "a microcosm of Canadian literature," we were a little curious to see what the people of the porcine city considered Canadian literature to be.