

of the immaturity and over-confidence of youth, but she has also its hopefulness, its buoyancy, its enthusiasm. The universities will be false to their trust if they do not turn this abundant energy to fruitful issues. It is their function not to produce men of genius—no university can do that—but to prepare the soil out of which genius may spring. Our universities ought to have a large share in the process of moulding the character of our people. Great scholars, thinkers and men of science do not arise by chance; they are the natural outgrowth of fit conditions.

Now, it is vain for us to disguise from ourselves that our universities have not hitherto done for Canada what Oxford and Cambridge have done for England, Leipsic and Berlin for Germany. With slender means, and as a consequence, with an insufficient body of teachers and inadequate equipment in other ways, they have helped to keep the torch of learning alive, but they have not to any extent produced a race of scholars and thinkers and men of science. When our young men have wished to carry their studies to a higher point they have been forced to go to the universities of the old world, or to those universities of the new world where a higher conception of the vocation of the scholar has prevailed. Surely the period of dependence should now come to an end. There is good hope, I think, that we are entering upon a fuller life. Our universities are gradually becoming easier in their financial condition, and have begun to add to their teaching staff. Many of our young men now aim at something higher than a mere pass, and of late years they have even entered with enthusiasm upon a course of post-graduate study. This is as it should be. The ordinary graduate of a Canadian university leaves college with less knowledge of certain sub-

jects than that with which most English boys enter it. The first two years of a Canadian student are usually spent in doing work that ought to have been done, and we may hope will yet be done, in the High School. One reason for this, no doubt is, that parents are so eager to have their boys enter upon what is called the "practical" work of life, that they send them to college in a lamentably inadequate state of preparation. In many cases, a boy comes to college at the age of sixteen, with an imperfect knowledge of his Latin grammar, with no knowledge of prose except what is enough to enable him to write a little dog Latin, and a superficial acquaintance with a book of Virgil and a book of Cæsar. At the end of his classical course it is still a struggle for him to make out without aid the simplest piece of Latin. How can it be expected that he should have any enthusiasm for Latin literature, or any real comprehension of the part which the Roman people have played in the civilization of the world? Naturally, he associates the name of Rome with a series of irksome tasks, and heartily wishes that the whole of its literature had shared the fate of the lost manuscripts of Virgil. No doubt the student who has taken an honour course in classics is beyond this elementary stage, but even he is just beginning to feel that he is fit for some bit of independent work of his own, when the pressure of necessity calls him imperiously away to do something that he can turn into a means of subsistence. The only wonder is that so many of our students have the courage to carry their studies beyond the point that usage has fixed. That of recent years an increasing number of our young men do so is a most hopeful sign, and it is the plain duty of the university to encourage them by all means in her power. This is the class from which we may yet hope to