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THE CLAIMS OF INDIVIDUALITY IN EDUCATION.

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JUST ten years ago, in the Jubilee year, 1887, I read a lecture here on "Fifty Years of Educational Progress." After the retrospect I indulged in a forecast, and spoke of some dangers that seemed to be looming in the future. I affirmed that we need not fear that the desire for education, which had been fairly aroused, would subside; but that there was danger in the tendency to require all men to pass through the same mould and the same gauge. It seemed that Procrustes was bound to have his victims, the dunces on the one hand being stretched beyond their powers, and the geniuses on the other hand stunted to an average capacity.

I drew attention to this danger in the changed condition of education by describing an analogous change in the philosophy of science. When it was believed that the supply of energy in the universe was being gradually exhausted, men often pictured the end of all things as coming from that ultimate exhaustion. The discovery that energy is transmutable but indestructible was accompanied by the discovery that energy is available for the service of man only in its transformations. If, for instance, all the parts of an enclosed and impervious region had the same temperature, no work could be done between the parts,

however high the temperature might be. To get work from heat, we must have bodies of different temperatures. If all the bodies in the universe had the same temperature, there would be neither life nor motion. Similarly, if all men had the same knowledge and skill and exactly similar tastes and temperaments there could be no interchange of ideas, however highly educated each man might be. The theory of the dissipation of energy and the theory of the extinction of individual differences by a Procrustean education are therefore similar and similarly situated, and either of these is sufficient to enable us to see the last man in the dim distance. Hence I pointed out that we ought to resist attempts to produce a dull and dead uniformity by means of education, as we would resist an attack on the life of society itself. Amongst the forms of liberty to be secured the liberty of capacity is not the least important. That combination of laws which we call Nature is allowed at present to assist us by presenting an endless variety as regards natural capacities. To quote from the "Stones of Venice": "One man is made of agate, another of oak, one of slate, another of clay. The education of the first is polishing; of the second, seasoning; of the third, rending; of the