

PROFESSOR AND STUDENT.

We, in America, by the ardent fire of our unreasoning devotion to democratic ideals, have burned away many barriers erected and pronounced good by the collective wisdom of mankind. The natural equality of all men has been made the major of an argument, whose conclusions are only properly termed absurdities. A glimpse at the various sides of life affords sufficient proof of the truth of this assertion. Except among Catholics, laymen hold themselves not a whit inferior to their pastors, and think it more blessed to give instruction than to receive. The relations between rich and poor, learned and illiterate, employer and employed, are all awry owing to the false notions prevalent on personal liberty and equal rights.

These same ideas have invaded the educational world, and completely upset the admirable harmony existing therein. What professor and student were, and are yet, in the great universities of Europe, would not suit progressive America. So a change was made. The professor was given to understand that his salary marked the quality and quantity of the return required; he became a highly paid tradesman, a refiner of raw material at so much per cubic inch. He was thus forced to assume the essentially false position of employé of his students, who paid his salary and were his masters. Hence what should be, to insure success, a labor of love, became an oppressive, ill-requited, disagreeable task. The student also missed his true aim—an earnest, respectful, docile pursuit of knowledge, and a deep love for it wherever found. The professor had no enthusiasm for his subject; the student, no confidence in his professor. The former received no sympathy from his class, gradually grew dull and uninteresting; the latter regarded the professor's lectures as bores, deliberately calculated to kill time, and thus it went from bad to

worse. And if we are behind the old world in higher education, it is due not so much to our young country, our inexperience, and the like, as to our deliberate choice of and adherence to false principles and false methods. We, of this age and country, can approach nearer to perfection in a decade, than our remote ancestors could in a century; but we are capable, too, of a like swiftness in retrogression.

University professors are, or at least should be, chosen for their broad views and general culture, as well as for special excellence in the branch they are designed to teach. There must be no lack of scholarship, but above all the instruction must be imparted in a clear and methodical manner, so as to train the mind, create a thirst for knowledge, and encourage personal research. No amount of money can be an equivalent of such work; but the true professor will value highest the progress of his students, the enthusiastic spirit that animates them, their unfailing love and respect for him, not only while he is directly connected with them, but ever afterwards through life.

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