

MR. RHODES AND GREATER OXFORD 7

raillerie est facile et n'a pas été ménagée ; mais l'étudiant vit dans la familiarité quotidienne des plus grands esprits de l'époque ; le ton régnant est une façon de camaraderie bienveillante ; chez les professeurs, le maître n'est pas distinct de l'homme du monde et de tous les jours, en sorte que leur influence pénètre tous les détails de la vie. Quel profit n'y a-t-il pas à s'entretenir à chaque instant avec un Max Müller ! Les jeunes gens le sentent d'instinct, quand ils recherchent la fréquentation et l'amitié du maître qui a su éveiller les parties nobles de leur âme.

It may perhaps come as a pleasant surprise to the ordinary Oxford tutor to hear himself included among "les plus grands esprits de l'époque," but he would not be much less pleased if he could recognise through the veil which lies to this day upon the hearts of all Englishmen, the real feeling with which his old friends and pupils, those who enjoyed "la fréquentation et l'amitié du maître," preserve their recollections of him still fragrant, still pungent ; laid carefully away like some aromatic among the many spiritual garments, now old-fashioned and outgrown, in which the gay soul of youth loved to strut, and which it still regrets and treasures. To hear of the death or resignation of an old tutor or the head of one's own college, is to "go down" again, to feel a loss twice over ; for in the "residential system" which Mr. Rhodes rightly admired, the Don is the most residential part ; the most immediate link with the past in a place where the past is the great secret, the fire to be handed on.

For this is the chief claim, the supreme excellence of Oxford, that the continuity of human thought and aspiration is nowhere else so shiningly visible, so instinctively and intensely felt ; no other place of learning is at once so free of the past and so irresistibly led by the hope of the coming age. Witness after witness attests it ; to one she is "the home of great movements," to another the haunted land of the Scholar Gipsy, of secret learning disembodied of poor feverish life ; or she breathes from her towers the last enchantment of the Middle Age, while to yet another, coming at dusk into the circle of the magic life in which he himself had no place, her streets are thronged with noble shadows of the dead and living,