

It now appears that emancipation is not unlikely to be followed by the overthrow of the monarchical institutions to which Brazil, alone of the South American countries, still clings, and the establishment of a Republic. The sudden emancipation of the slaves, it is said, did not allow time for the substitution of voluntary for forced labour in the fields, and a large portion of the crops was in consequence lost. The emancipated negroes will not work, it is said, for their former masters, and other labourers are not to be had. The landed proprietors are, naturally enough, discontented and surly, and the whole country is in a condition of unrest. This state of affairs has gained for the Crown Princess, to whom the abolition of slavery was largely due, the enmity of landed proprietors and other classes of the people, and has served to stimulate and increase the latent Republicanism of the country. The general elections were held last month, and resulted in a decisive victory for the Liberal or Monarchist party—a victory due partly to their progressive programme, and partly, we are told, to judicious manipulation of patronage and to an impressive display of military force throughout the campaign. Despite this victory, however, Republicanism still lives and grows, and the days of the Empire are thought to be bound up with those of Dom Pedro II., who can scarcely add many years to the fifty-eight during which he has occupied the throne. A Republic founded by men opposed to, or at least not in strong sympathy with, the abolition of slavery, anomalous as it may seem, would not be without historic precedent on this continent.

IF it be true that Mr. Gladstone is about to formulate his new Home Rule scheme, his manifesto will be scanned with intense interest by all classes of British subjects. It would be useless to deny the grave significance of the series of Radical successes in the by-elections which have taken place during the last few months. There is no doubt some ground for Mr. Balfour's opinion that these successes indicate a growing tendency, not indeed towards socialism in the political sense of that word, but towards democracy. But, to those at a distance at least, it seems more probable that the result is mainly due to a growing impatience with the everlasting Irish Question, and a desperate resolve to have the matter settled in some way, and removed out of the path to much-needed legislation it has so long obstructed. Nothing, the common people may be supposed to persuade themselves, can be much worse than the present situation. It may be thought almost better to try any experiment, however hazardous, which has in it any chances of success, than to go on in an endless round of indecisive struggles in Parliament and in refractory Ireland. While Mr. Balfour, with characteristic firmness and tenacity of purpose, holds fast, apparently, his faith in the administrative policy to which his reputation is pledged, there are not wanting indications that other members of the Government may be beginning to look around for some place of compromise. Such seems at least a fair inference from the hint thrown out by one of them the other day, that there might be no objection to giving Ireland legislative control of purely local affairs, if that would satisfy her aspirations. Should the result of the electoral struggle in Brighton show that the Radical tide is still rising, it is not unlikely that Lord Salisbury may feel himself constrained to adopt some new or modified line of policy, with a view to avert a result which would seem otherwise inevitable.

THE STUDY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

THERE are few scholars, even the most conservative or reactionary, who would wish to go back to the old methods of university teaching in which the English language had no place. But there is a distinct danger connected with the manner in which this important work of the teaching of English—now deemed necessary—is being done; and we have pleasure in drawing attention to some timely warnings which have been offered by Professor Cappon, of Queen's University, in a lecture delivered at the beginning of the academical year, and published in the *Kingston British Whig*, of October 17.

If the advocates of the old order were bigoted and prejudiced against all innovations, it can hardly be denied that many of the modern school are self-satisfied and conceited, and, moreover, there is a very great danger that, under the new system of neglecting the classics for the study of English, there will not be as good English scholars as under the old system, in which our mother tongue seemed to be overlooked. This may sound paradoxical; but we believe it to be strictly true, and it is to this danger

principally that Professor Cappon draws attention in his lecture.

Mr. Cappon finds a foeman worthy of his steel in Dr. E. A. Freeman, author of the great work on the Norman Conquest and Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. At least, we suppose it is this Professor Freeman that he means, as we do not remember a "Professor Freeman, of Cambridge." But there may be such an one, and this is a point of no importance whatever. In the matter of controversy we are entirely with Professor Cappon. We agree with his opinions, and we highly commend his statement and illustration of them.

"Professor Freeman," he says, "thinks that English literature should not be taught at universities at all, because it does not deal with facts, but is a matter of pure taste and opinion in which there is no agreement; and again, because, in his opinion, it cannot be taught (especially because it cannot be crammed), and, lastly, because it cannot be examined upon. These are his own phrases, as they appeared in his own article on the subject, as they appeared in the *Contemporary Review*, for October, 1887."

Professor Cappon points out that such statements entirely ignore the practical importance of English literature in our ordinary life; and his remarks are of peculiar importance in reference to the state of things existing in this country. As regards the condition of education in England, Dr. Freeman may be practically right, although we hold him to be theoretically wrong. He argues that because our judgments about literature are very much a matter of taste, therefore it is of no use for one person to teach another what he is to think of certain writers. But surely this is far from the truth and common sense of the matter. It is not merely matters of fact that we can be taught, and are taught, it is matters of taste as well. Probably three persons out of four learn what they are to like or dislike from the good or bad examples of those by whom they are accustomed to be guided. This is true of language and of literature alike.

It is indeed not impossible, or even improbable, that Dr. Freeman may be nearly right in his practical judgments, although we hold him to be in error theoretically. In England, young men go up to Oxford and Cambridge with a practical knowledge of English and English literature which cannot be expected of, and which is not possessed by, the ordinary undergraduate of our Canadian universities. Most English university students come from educated families. Most of them are trained at one or other of the great public schools. The practical knowledge of English is like an instinct to them; and, although they are not beyond the need of guidance and instruction on the subject of English literature, and Professorships and Lectureships are now being founded in both of the ancient universities for that purpose, still no one can consider the need so pressing there as it is here.

But however this may be, looking at things as they are among ourselves, we may see the need of Professor Cappon's warning in various ways. In the first place, the old training in the classics, which constituted the liberal education of former times, is now falling into the background. In the second place, our University education is largely for "the people," and not merely for certain "classes." Lastly, the attempt to teach English philology is producing a number of students who are becoming quite clever at breaking up the language and reducing it to its elements, but who have no skill at all in putting its parts together.

Professor Cappon is by no means an enemy to the teaching of philology. Indeed it would be impossible for an intelligent student of any language to think lightly of the science which explained its origin and development, in short, its history. Whether we consider the language itself or the literature in which its progress is displayed, it is quite clear that our understanding of both will greatly depend upon our knowledge of the actual facts of its history. But, the Professor remarks, "It is a well-known fact that the philological knowledge of words contributes little or nothing to the power of using them." It is not easy to exaggerate the importance of this statement, considering how generally its truth is ignored. And, after all, what is language for but for using—for reading, and speaking, and writing? It exists that thought may exist and become precise and exact. It exists that we may gain a knowledge of the thoughts of others and convey our thoughts to them. The mere philologist who can crack the shells of words and can do no more with them gets little more good from them than the chemist who can analyze the food upon his table, but has no appetite for it and cannot eat it, gets from the repast prepared for him.

Professor Cappon then was fully justified when he said, "I do not mean to disparage philology as a special form of scientific study, but I mean to say that it has no right to thrust itself into the place of the more important sides of an English education. I consider that a philological course of study, exhibiting the principal facts in the growth of the English language, is an essential part of the scholar's education, but I cannot admit that it is entitled to the sole, or even to the first, place in the teaching of English at our Universities. Such an idea could arise only in the minds of those who are ignorant where the true strength of culture lies."

A very remarkable testimony to the value of the older methods of education deserves special notice, from the fact that a vast number of our modern educationalists are ignorant of the truth to which witness is borne, or even deny it to be a truth altogether. "In former days," says the Professor, "this liberal culture used to be derived mainly from the study of Latin and Greek at the Universities, and these languages, with their literature, formed a very effective and admirable means of culture as long as the attention of the student was concentrated upon them from his first year at the Grammar School to his last year at the University. Those were the days when an English statesman could quote to the House of Commons a passage from Juvenal or Horace, and the quotation would go to the hearts of three-fourths of the members. But in these days of ours, with optional courses, in which the study of classics is reduced to a minimum, or, at most, carried on for two or three years, this fine ideal of classical culture has become, for many of our students, impracticable." We are sorry that we cannot quote the whole passage of which these sentences form a part. It is weighty and valuable.

Such culture as is here referred to, is for most men, impossible. The classics can never be in the future what they have been in the past; and we must make up our minds to supplement our imperfect knowledge of them, or to make up for our ignorance of them, by some other method of study and training.

Professor Cappon illustrates the kind of work which he desires to have done by some remarks on the study of Wordsworth. It is very likely that many of his hearers and readers may refuse to place that great poet on so high a pedestal as that which is erected by the Professor. But no one can deny that the critics of his poetry were, to a great extent, blind leaders of the blind. No one can deny that Wordsworth was the exponent of ideas then in the air which were "caviare to the general"; or that these ideas are now, if not exactly daily bread, yet very widely "learned and inwardly digested" by a large number of the educated men and women of the present day.

Professor Cappon thus illustrates the work of a teacher of English literature in regard to what he calls the *biographical problem*. "How," he asks, "did the writer—or let us take Wordsworth again as an example—how did Wordsworth come to accomplish this great work of giving men a new and profounder conception of things? What evidences are there in his writings, or in other records of the growth of his conceptions, of the struggle of the whole discipline both of character and intellect, which he underwent before he could systematize the new thoughts stirring within him, and bring them before the world in a clear shape. And here all the subtle relations which exist between character and intellect, between the moral nature of the man and the modes of thought and speech which he has developed become the subject of the student's research." Here is a very noble conception of the work of the teacher of literature. We imagine that very few persons who read these lines will agree with Professor Freeman's judgment that such things cannot be taught. It reminds us that Aristotle held, in a manner, that morals could not be taught, and for all that, wrote a treatise on the subject, which, without laying claim to any special powers of prophecy, we may safely pronounce immortal. Whether students can be examined on such things seems to us a matter of very small importance. We certainly have examining enough, and it will not hurt us to learn some things out of which we can make no capital for an examination.

We hope to hear of, and from, Professor Cappon again, and we congratulate Queen's on the possession of a teacher of a vision so clear, and with lips so eloquent to tell the vision.

The smallest circular saw in practical use is a tiny disc about the size of a shilling, which is employed in cutting the slits in gold pens. These saws are about as thick as ordinary paper, and revolve some 4,000 times per minute.