

ing intended rather as a chantry than as a literary institution by its founder, whose wish in later times was negatively observed by sinecurism combined with social exclusiveness. Till 1854 the mediæval codes of statutes remained legally in force and continued to cut off the colleges from intellectual progress. But in 1856 the bulk of them were swept away by a Commission of Reform under the authority of Parliament. The British Parliament never formulates principles, but in the University Reform Act it practically established the principle that the inviolability of a founder's will must be confined to his main object, and that all details must be subject to revision by proper authority whenever change of circumstances might render it expedient. Fifty years was the period taken as the limit beyond which no founder's foresight with regard to the best means of giving effect to his main object could be expected to extend; and the commissioners were empowered to deal freely with the details of every foundation which had been in existence for that period. This question is one which the people of the United States may some day be called upon to consider, if they do not wish their noble treasury of endowments to become a museum of donor's whims; at present it seems to be governed not so much by the philosophy of Turgot, the writer of the famous article in the *Encyclopædia*, as by the arguments of Daniel Webster, which are not philosophical, but forensic. A covenant with the dead may be kept in the letter, but if Time, the unceasing innovator, has broken it in the spirit, and there is no legislative power of bringing the spirit and the letter again into agreement with each other, the dead man himself is the most wronged. Scrupulous respect for the sanctity of property is a popular feeling so invaluable that we might well bear much inconven-

ience rather than impair it in the slightest degree; but it would surely not be difficult to make it plain to popular apprehension that there is no robbery in abrogating provisions which a founder himself, supposing him to be a reasonable being, would have abrogated had he lived to see their effect. A wise and thoroughly generous man would deprecate the compulsory observance of the details of his will in a public institution for fifty years, perhaps even for a single year, after his death. Even where munificence is common, as we have every year illustrious proof of its being in the United States, munificence combined with entire freedom from vanity and from the lurking desire of self-perpetuation is comparatively rare. The most noble-hearted founders of intellectual institutions are sometimes personally unacquainted with the essential conditions of success; and bounty, saddled with the enactments of ignorance, may be a dead loss to the unwary recipient. "Never look a gift-horse in the mouth" is a foolish proverb, as many a public museum and other institution can testify. If the Trojans had looked a gift-horse in the mouth, they would have seen something which concerned them deeply.

The Reform Commissioners of 1854, however, failed to deal comprehensively with the question of celibacy. Their hesitation was not unnatural. On the one hand, compulsory celibacy is at variance with the principles of modern society, and fatal to the permanency of the college faculty, the members of which, in fact, have usually taken up teaching only as a mode of employing their time and increasing their income while they were waiting for a college living or other preferment. On the other hand, to abrogate the rule would be to put an end to the social life and break up the whole system of the