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Editorial Comments.



IF there is one thing more than another which causes dissatisfaction among the friends of the University it is the position of our Fellowships. There is always a sneaking consciousness that we are participating in the practice of a little piece of deception upon the university world generally. We wish to be

looked upon as a university of considerable importance; all important universities have fellowships; therefore we must have fellowships also, and we make a public announcement to that effect in our calendars. But what we really have is a number of poorly-paid and hard-worked instructors or tutors.

A fellowship, properly so-called, is a mark of distinction granted to graduates who show themselves capable and desirous of pursuing original study and investigation; a money allowance is connected with it to enable the holder to do so without financial embarrassment; and he is supposed to receive some assistance and guidance from the professor of his department. In the University of Toronto this guidance seldom amounts to more than instructions to "take" certain parts of the curriculum work and give lectures thereupon to hypercritical, when not contemptuously absent, undergraduates; and the money paid is simply an exceedingly small salary for the services thus rendered. The work given to the Fellows is so great as to leave no opportunity of more advanced study; and even if it did, no assistance could be expected from the already over-worked professors. Other universities may indeed occasionally have semi-tutorial fellowships, but they certainly do not make the holders of them work like the sixth master of a Collegiate Institute.

If the small remuneration, in comparison with the amount of work, has not always deterred our best graduates from accepting these positions, their action in accepting is scarcely ever to be attributed to a real desire or intention to pursue the study of their particular subject for its own sake. To be the holder of a fellowship in the University of Toronto may form an excellent recommendation in the eyes of uninitiated High School Boards; it may occasionally relieve from attendance at the bothersome School of Pedagogy; it may, by hard squeezing, be combined with other more ambitious but rather inconsistent plans of advancement in life; it may keep one at the educational centre of the province, where "good snaps" are most quickly heard of—all this it may do quite successfully, but as an inducement to pursue real post-graduate study, or as an indication that such is being pursued, when the simple fact is that no post-graduate course whatever exists, it is a farcical and deceptive failure. No blame can be attached to any graduates, if any there be, who have accepted fellowships from the above motives. All our Fellows have earned, and more than earned the money given them, and the fault is

not theirs if they have not done work for which no opportunity or assistance is given.

What then is to be done? Well, if there is really a necessity for such instructors, by all means let us have them and pay them their salary; but let us call them by a name that will tell the truth about their position instead of being at once the expression and the screen of unfulfilled pretensions.

Yet is not another course possible? This University exists, its funds are expended for the advancement of higher education. Six thousand five hundred dollars are spent annually in buying the services of thirteen Fellows to give instruction to undergraduates. Is it unreasonable to enquire whether better results would not be obtained, whether the cause of higher education in the province would not be better served if these under-graduates were left to paddle among the shoals for themselves a little more and the Fellows thereby enabled to dive into deeper waters? The lectures now given are not, and can scarcely be expected to be, little more than judicious selections from the leading authorities—very valuable, no doubt, but open to all alike—and what the undergraduates would lose by their discontinuance might conceivably be more than compensated, from the University's point of view, by what the Fellows would gain in opportunities for advanced study. And even supposing that some lectures on these subjects are indispensable, and that, if the professors are obliged to give them, some other subjects would have to suffer, is it certain that even then any absolute loss would be incurred? To explain the mysteries of the Latin Subjunctive to a fellow who is at the moment reading notes on the conceivability of the Ego, the Hen, and the Pan, to elucidate the Binomial Theorem to a man who has his eye on a classical scholarship, to illustrate the idioms with *avoir* to a fellow whose whole soul is absorbed in frogs' muscles and the properties of calcium, to do any of these to a herd of lazy fellows who are simply slouching away an hour, especially when they should have learned it all before entering the University, or might, if they had any stuff in them and meant business, find it out for themselves, instead of sitting like ten-year-old country school boys, carving upon the desks their names and the year of an illusive graduation—to spend time lecturing to such fellows as these may be the dutiful act of a wearied but conscientious professor, but it is extremely doubtful whether a truer interpretation of a professor's duty would justify the performance of such humdrum High School work, or condemn him, if, leaving it to take care of itself, he proceeded to employments more worthy of his abilities and more fruitful of results in the cause of learning. Too much labor and money is being spent upon the bottom of our structure. It is time we felt faith in the stability of our foundation and proceeded to crown the edifice befittingly. Until we have a true post-graduate course of study, until many of those who receive their B.A. are induced to take it, until non-tutorial fellowships are numbered among those inducements, we do not in reality deserve the name of a university at all. At present we are a cross between a university and a preparatory college, and the anomalous position of our Fellows is the clearest evidence of the hybridity.