

## University Education and the Community

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Two of the duties of a University are to train men and to advance truth. I would add a third—certainly not least important of the three, though usually not very clearly recognised—I mean the duty of the University to the community. A University may adequately fulfil the first two functions, and yet be only partially successful if it does not at the same time perform its duty to the nation and the city. The place of the University today is not in peaceful academic grooves, not away from the world's busy life but in the very centre of it—and how it must stand in the very closest relation to that life. If it is the duty of the University to train men, the chief thing for which it has to train them is **citizenship**. Of some of its students it will make men who will be specialists in their own particular branch—spreading and advancing knowledge. But to the great bulk of them its purpose must be to give a broad general culture, to develop in them the appreciation of beauty and truth, to encourage habits of independent thought, and along with and above all this it must place in the forefront the ideal of citizenship. Our education has come to be to so large an extent a State undertaking that it is fitting that it should be related throughout to the needs of the State. In virtue of the contributions which the State makes to education it has the right to expect that our institutions of learning will produce, not merely men fully trained in their professions and assured of large incomes, but men and women whose first duty is felt to be, not to themselves, but to the community, and that the Universities should concentrate their attention on the real live problems of the day. And particularly close should be the relation of the University to the community in these days of democracy. We are face to face to-day with the uprising of the people in every land, with the sweeping away of what are regarded as sham democracies and the substitution of the rule of the proletariat. It is a movement, which, I feel confident, contains the germs of great good. At the moment, however, it is not without its dangers, just in so far as education has failed—and failed because it has not really had the opportunity—to provide men of knowledge and vision as leaders of the people. The greatest need of our modern times is that of leadership, wise, noble and disinterested, for democracy. That is perhaps in some ways the University's greatest opportunity. "The whole danger at the present moment," said Sir Auckland Geddes recently, "comes from the fact that the leaders do not see life because they have never had the whole of life presented to them as only a University can present life. The graduate of the Universities are the pilots who can steer the ship of civilization off the reefs."

To the State or the nation then the University has important duties—the importance of which we are only beginning to realize in this country—but it has also its duty to the city. It is from the city, from its immediate environment, that it draws its chief inspiration, it is to the city that it must give its best gifts. Most of the modern Universities are in a very definite sense Municipal. They draw their students, in the main, not from a wide area, but from the bounds of the Municipality, the needs of which they were primarily created to serve, and it is from the Municipality and its citizens that they derive most of their support. They are institutions of the city, challenging the exercise of civic pride. Take, for instance, the University of Liverpool, where the idea of a University College in that apparently purely materialistic city was launched in 1879, it was laughed to scorn—just as the similar idea in regard to Johannesburg was laughed to scorn in 1916. Fancy making Liverpool—commercial, money-making Liverpool—a University centre! What use had Liverpool for a University! How could an academic institution exist in a city all-absorbed in business! But gradually the conception of the modern University and its function as turning out earnest, wide-awake citizens, skilled in every walk of life, able to do good service to the city, was grasped, and ridicule turned into sympathy. And it was when the municipality showed its sympathy in a practical way by presenting a site and building valued at

£30,000 that the scheme may be said to have crystallised—some of you will no doubt again notice the Johannesburg parallel. And throughout, the Liverpool City Council has been one of the chief forces behind the University movement. Not merely did it give the University College its original site and buildings, but soon after it provided a further site for new chemical laboratories, the effect of which was to gain for it the right of entry into the Victoria University. It was the city, too, that enabled the University College to develop in due course into an independent University. The City Council was foremost in urging this step, and as a proof that its sympathy was genuine it obtained powers to levy a rate up to 1d in the £1 for University purposes. As a result the University of Liverpool receives a regular annual grant of £10,000 from the City for running costs—by other special grants the Corporation has improved the equipment of the University, especially in its Education Department and on the Science side; and by means of a generous scholarship system the Council and a number of other local bodies have opened the doors of the University to poorer students. Thus then one may say that the City of Liverpool looks on the University as a civic undertaking, while the University on its part repays its debt by training good and useful citizens. And the same applies also to other city Universities. Thus Birmingham receives an annual grant of £16,000 from the Municipal funds, Sheffield £13,000, and Cardiff £11,000. In America the relationship between University and Municipality has in some cases been even closer. Thus the City of New York includes in its Municipal activities the running of two University Colleges of high standing—one for men and another for women. In neither of these is any fee charged for tuition—the total cost of running the institutions comes from the Municipal chest. In 1916 there was spent on the college for men £105,000 and on the college for women £110,000. In the former case there was a teaching staff of 220 and a student body of 4,994—in the other a staff of 181 with 3,130 students, the property of the two institutions were valued at £1,700,000. Another of these Municipal institutions is the University of Cincinnati, which in 1916 drew £130,000 from the Municipal chest, had a staff of 138 and 2,292 students. These are striking instances—yet in the generous support which the Municipality of Johannesburg is giving to the University College there is proof that in this respect South Africa is not lagging behind the most progressive Municipalities of Europe and the United States.

And the support which the city gives to the University is not without its justification, for the services which the University can in its turn render to the city are not to be despised. In the training of citizens the University should bear in mind not merely the needs of the nation, but also the needs of the city. It is a common complaint in these days that Municipal institutions have outlived their value. There is ground for the complaint, but the remedy is not lacking. It is due to the fact that the growing complexity of our civilization is in our bigger towns leaving less and less room for the natural growth of the civic spirit—but it is here that education must come to the rescue. Our schools and colleges must teach the lesson that man is not born unto himself, but that his life is in and for the community—and in the inculcation and realization of that spirit the University can play a great part. And further, it is the duty of the University to apply itself to the study of the special problems of the community in which its lot is cast, to help to arrive at some solution of them. Finally, it is its duty to stand forth as a centre of light and leading in the community, spreading culture and high ideals, potent in its influence for the social and intellectual betterment of the citizens. It is because of what a University institution can achieve in the way of changing the whole outlook of a community, giving it a higher ideal, a loftier vision, because of that, if for no other reason, that we should applaud the decision come to in 1916, in terms of which the number of University centres in this country was left undiminished.

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