

TEMPORA MUTANTUR.

Rotten privilege and custom,
Coriolanus, Act I, Sc. 1.
 Get you gone!
Ibid, Act III, Sc. 1.

The practical man has always been recognised as an obstructive, an opponent of progress, in whose mouth are ever the anathemas of 'dreamer,' 'sentimentalist,' 'utopian.' And we may well forgive him, for he is an honest fellow, and an industrious. But there are several reasons why people take things for granted, however poorly evidenced, and venerate the established however obviously offensive. There are the want of time to find something better, laziness, and a morbid love for a certain amount of mystery, not reaching to terror. This last is a form of the only real paradox of the many that would-be-philosophic blues and half-starved fanatics like Pascal are so fond of charging humanity with. It is the same in-comprehensible pleasure in a little pain that we have in tearing off the incrustation that forms over a wound or pulling hairs out of the nostril. The satisfaction in these contradictions especially characterises the very young or very old, and where general, is the first sign that a nation is becoming effete. If anyone doubts the prevalence of this admiration of the mysterious let him go to the next spiritualistic or prestidigitator entertainment that favors Toronto, or notice how the lower classes in England regard a certain Hebrew conjurer.

In this country, as in all recently founded nationalities, there has been no time or no money for anything but hard work with the tools and materials we derived from more advanced civilizations. The reason we have not been active in reform is the first of these mentioned. As intimated, the last seems to be powerful in declining or stand-still communities. The other—laziness—always affects a large number of the population, who only change when a softer couch has been prepared for them.

We are now prepared to regard the recent article in the *Contemporary Review* on Freedom, by Prof. Max Muller, in its bearing upon ourselves. He sees very clearly the evidence of healthy and progressive society in variety of opinion, and while believing that J. S. Mill was mistaken in the cause, he still dreads a Chinese-mandarin uniformity from the influence of the past. Everything in England seems to point to such an event where, in politics at least, one party calls itself conservative and the other rates it for not being so. How is it with us? We have now got rich enough to take breath and think just a moment, and we are all for change. In Canada, both political parties call themselves liberal, and vie with each other in originating progressive measures. Again, Prof. Muller points to the universities and shows how inadequately they perform their most valuable functions—of encouraging free enquiry and breaking down the idols set up by early dogmatic teaching. Here again we are progressive. We have specialized our university course to a high degree and made subjects other than purely scholastic ones optional with candidates for degrees. Before our literary society questions are debated that men can really take an interest in. We have already heard something—too little, alas!—on a vital problem in political economy. In a week we shall discuss the subject that more than

any other is engrossing the attention of all mankind—future punishment and its influence as a belief on morality. But the most powerful influence is to be exerted by our curriculum, not only as to the subject-matter of examinations, but the manner of holding them. There can be no doubt, as Prof. Muller points out, that examinations on text-books have a terribly levelling effect. Of course we learn what the book says. If we understand it, so much the easier for us; but the examiner neither knows or cares. How are we to avoid this? Abolish examinations? Yes, some; let there be two university examinations—one for entrance, the other for a degree. Meantime let the college examinations be held yearly: let the professors be the examiners and let them follow the example of one, who, to his honor be it said, had the sense and courage to declare on a paper: 'Intelligent originality will be appreciated.'

Finally, as to the actual course. Here the senate of the university has shown itself progressive, and on the right path. The most prominent features in the curriculum of 1877 are raising the standard of entrance, and differentiation of the subsequent course. This is true evolution, as Herbert Spencer defines it, 'a change from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity.' This is the condition of the passman, and always will be; chaos that mistakes itself for omniscience. The honor courses are being reformed more and more in each successive curriculum from such a state. A specialization ensues that has all the arguments at its back that commend the division of labour, plus the inestimable benefits of permitting students to pursue subjects in which they take an interest—to utilize their hobbies; as a consequence of securing their attention and actually inspiring them with a love of knowledge; and, above all, of giving them an opportunity of forming independent opinions, in marked contrast with the necessarily derived and indistinct views of the dabbler. A senate so liberal and so wise in the past is not likely to become suddenly blind to the signs of the times. In a few years they will again perceive the necessity of a farther jaunt in the same direction. The enormous educational activity of the province is too manifest to escape their notice; and they will take advantage of it, and do away with junior matriculation and the first year, making the present senior matriculation examination necessary for entrance, with the addition perhaps of a Greek play and inorganic chemistry. Then those who intend to be professional scholars of languages and to teach them, can pursue those courses untrammelled. Those who have other aims can well afford to let them have two scholarships to one in the other departments. They will retain, with some additions perhaps, the present work in the second year, and largely in the third, in the scientific courses (mathematical, natural, mental, moral and political science), and in the last year live wholly in the region of free investigation, whether by experiment or wide reading, with a view to having their originality tested. In mathematics there is plenty of choice—astronomy, light, kinetics, etc. In what we now call loosely 'metaphysics,' there might come the much-mooted differentiation of the course in political economy, constitutional history and the foundation of jurisprudence. But natural

science is the department that calls already most loudly for reform. The students in this course which should be most free from dogma and most valuable in iconoclasm, feel themselves most incompetent to do more for at present than stick to the text books, to 'make full marks,' as a recent well-known gra luate used to express it; and they most keenly perceive to how little real knowledge or real mental training full marks testify. Now, were it compulsory for a student at some time during his career to take a course in inductive logic, and to devote himself to chemistry or natural history, or geology and assaying, in his fourth year, he might know more of science and know it better; he could study and appreciate the important theories discussed, and form intelligent opinions regarding them, and reach a point at which the university, in presenting his degree might confidently say:

"Ne te quæsieris extra."

THE MUSEUM OWL.

THE PASS COURSE.

It is hardly necessary to say to the students of University College that the pass course is thought by some to be a somewhat despised mode of graduation; and unless one is an 'honor man' he does not mean much in the students' class list. This, it appears to me, is a great mistake.

There are four real professions into which our graduates can betake themselves—law, theology, medicine, and general teaching. Now, to one who intends to teach a special sort of work an honor course is well suited. Is this true of the other three professions? I think not. William Pitt used to define an educated man as 'one who knew a little about everything and everything about something.' If, then, a graduate enters either of the three regular professions he can have ample opportunities of getting his full measurement taken; and attaining to the highest position as a specialist.

The real object of an art's course is to impart a general and useful store of learning and a sound mental training. The former can be best secured by a variety of studies; the latter, from any subject carefully and accurately prepared. Thus the pass course by no means appears in so unfavourable a light as on a hasty view it might.

There is something in a name, however, and few like to be called 'pass men,' as that rather reflects on their abilities in a manner not agreeable to youthful ambition. Might it not be well for the Senate to take the sixth graduating department under their protection and favour; and make the amount of work as nearly as possible equal to an honor department, with the same percentage. After having done this, attach to it scholarships and medals to be awarded to those taking highest average stand, and change the name from 'the pass' to 'the general proficiency course.'

Were this done, I feel sure that it would be the popular department. Many would enter it because its varied nature would render it more congenial to their tastes than an exclusive course, feeling at the same time their industry should meet with a suitable reward. A reform in this direction is needed, and the feeling is certainly growing that it should be granted. I do not say that the present pass course should be chosen; but suitable modification of it could easily be drafted. F.