



VOL. XXXIII.

MARCH 15th, 1906.

No. 10

THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS.

EVERY well organized department in a University may be said to have two objects, the extensive and the intensive development of its subject. The teaching staff must aim at increasing the number of those familiar with and interested in their special branch of knowledge, and must also prepare a chosen few for the task of widening the bounds of knowledge itself. To these two branches may be given the names of Popularisation and of Research, but it must not be forgotten that the two are not separate, much less antagonistic, but blend one into the other. In history at least, and so far as I know in other departments of work no man can make new discoveries until he knows how far the confines of knowledge already extend. This may sound a platitude, but for want of keeping it in mind some Canadian advocates of Research seem to me to have gone astray, and to wish to send forth the young student on his voyage to

"Seas unsailed and shores unhailed," before he has learnt the use of the Mariner's Compass, much less of the Sextant.

Prior to 1868, the historical department of the University of Paris confined itself almost entirely to Popularisation. Brilliant lecturers addressed

crowded audiences, and drew enthusiastic ovations from fashionable listeners who attended historical lectures for much the same reason that they took liqueur with their coffee. Help for the special student there was none. Research was not at a standstill. Few could sit at the feet of Michelet or of Quinet without having their ardour roused, and as Research is after all only a matter of trained common-sense, much valuable work was done. But how many false trails were explored, how much energy was expended in vain, how many efforts were faulty and incomplete for want of the trained guidance which should have been theirs! In 1868 a Research department was founded under the name of the *Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes*, with literary, scientific, theological, and historical branches. Then came the war with Germany, and when the work of national reconstruction began, the University of Paris in common with other departments of the national life, sat down at the feet of its conquerors. The result is that one now finds at Paris a department of History, organized and systematized in all its branches equal to that of any German University. In my opinion, it is superior. While taking over all that is valuable of thoroughness and