

undoubtedly the one to be followed. What is required is unquestionably—1st, the separation of History and Ethnology from the course; 2nd, the foundation of a chair in German; 3rd, the establishment of a professorship of Romance Languages; 4th, a different standard of examination—let the honors be given for prose; 5th, the abolition of all authors in the fourth and perhaps also in the third years.

This will require money of course, but until it is done students will have to depend upon themselves for the acquirement of a practical knowledge of French and German outside the College, or following routine, turn themselves into dry accumulators of facts for examinations to be forgotten as soon as they are over, and University College must be content to remain in a state of inefficiency in one of its most important departments.

ARCH. MACMECHAN.

To the Editor of the 'Varsity.

DEAR SIR,—Your article *re* the Modern Languages is not more remarkable for the disparagement it contains than for the deplorable ignorance shown, of that course. This department should have not only its professors and representative on the Council, but also an equal number of scholarships with the two pampered departments of Classics and Mathematics.

In what way has this department always 'presented a sorry spectacle'? It is the broadest and most liberal course in the College to-day, and, when we consider that lectures are no criterion of the work done, it is certainly incorrect to assume that the work is neglected because 'the teaching has been wretched' (?)

Philology is neglected, is it? Had you to get up German, French and Italian Philology, perhaps you would change your tune about its being neglected. And Literature—did you never hear a modern man complaining of the quantity of English, German and Italian Literature he has read?

Perhaps you will be surprised to learn that teaching to speak the languages has not been the aim, except, perhaps, as regards French; and something higher has been aimed at.

What beneficial re-organization would you make in the curriculum? Perhaps you would replace Milton by Swinburne and Molière by Jules Verne. What are the books you would sweep away? I know but one that is at all worthy of your censure; and I claim to be somewhat acquainted with the course.

To abolish specified literary works in the final year, and demand a knowledge of the 'chief productions of the two nations' is as absurd as it would be impossible to accomplish the latter. To those who have time and pleasure to read the hundred and one authors, good and bad alike, Craik and Demogeot may seem tame, but to ordinary mortals they are valuable, as pointing out what is good, and in giving some knowledge of a host of men, whose works one cannot hope to read.

I would be, for one, sorry to see History separated from the Languages, to the study of which it is such a valuable companion, and bears such a close connection. In reading Dante or Milton, it is not out of place to become acquainted with Mediæval Florence or the Puritans. Still, a less quantity of History would undoubtedly be acceptable to the over-burdened Modern man.

One would imagine in reading your article that the whole Modern Department is rotten and not of much account, whereas it is well arranged, and vastly superior to the same course in other colleges, not only in the selection of authors, but also in the degree of excellence required to be attained by those taking the course.

E. J.

To the Editor of the 'Varsity.

The assertions in your last issue regarding the Department of Modern Languages, appear to me to be too sweeping, and to some extent contradictory. You speak in general as if all the lecturers in this department were neglecting their work, while at the same time in one short sentence you except two of them. Now it seems to me very unfair that the two gentlemen who are admittedly doing good work, should be made to bear by implication the blame which justly falls on others. Your intention may be by such a procedure to make your censures so general as not to injure the feelings of those who have merited them. But the use of general terms in such cases is a clear injustice. Let every individual stand or fall on his own merits.

Again you say that philology is entirely neglected. Now I have merely to say that in one of the departments at least this is not a fact. I do not understand your reasons for making a misstatement.

I am in entire sympathy with your statement that 'the claims of professors to consideration depend only on their doing their work well.' It is a folly to take it for granted that a professor is *ex officio*

entitled to respect. If he deserves the respect of the students they will voluntarily and readily yield to him; if he does not deserve it, then he should not get it, and it is an injustice to those who are deserving to give it to him. A lecturer has no right to rely for respect on the possession of abilities which he has long since ceased to exercise, at least if the cause of the cessation is indolence and not physical infirmity. Virtues in the plu-perfect tense are negative quantities and valueless.

If a lecturer frequently does not come into his class-room until fifteen or twenty minutes after the proper time, and goes over his work in the most perfunctory and listless manner after he does come in, he must not expect from his students innate stupidity enough to respect him to any great degree.

If this state of things actually exists, it will not avail anything for those interested to rail at the persons exposed to it. The sensible course under the circumstances is to inaugurate a reform and to be quick about it. *Verbum sap.*

Yours, etc.,

REFORM.

To the Editor of the 'Varsity.

DEAR SIR,—The 'Varsity claims to be the representative of undergraduate and graduate opinion and feeling. Allow me to point out that if it wishes to justify that claim it must manifest more care for the honor and dignity of our professors and lecturers. The insolent and otherwise purposeless howl of 'A Stevenson' should never have found a place in our college paper, even under protest. But where will this Vandalism end if the staff allow editorials even more insulting in their remarks to appear? The Modern Language course undoubtedly needs reform, but, if we cannot discuss these changes without indulging in personalities, it would be better both for the undergraduates and the College that it remain as it is. And why select the lectures of one sub-department for special denunciation? Is it because their comparative excellence allows some hope of the wished-for improvement if the lecturer in German be well-stimulated? Otherwise, those familiar with the department will have difficulty in understanding why criticism should be severest where least merited. If this movement reaches the Senate of the University, as I hope it may, it will be then seen that the responsibility for the character of the course does not rest entirely upon the shoulders of the lecturers. Neither will our course be aided by disparaging men who justly possess the confidence of that body. My object in writing, however, is not to regulate the 'Varsity, but to call attention to one point in the editorial in question, and give to it a greater and I think deserved prominence. Anglo-Saxon is passed over with a mere reference. The restoration of Spanish and extension of Italian is seemingly considered of more importance. Those, however, who have enjoyed the advantage of a training in English based on a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon will be far from admitting this. Some of our graduates, to their credit be it said, have mastered the language, and, convinced of its advantage and indeed necessity from their own experience as teachers of English, have sought to place the subject before the Senate through Convocation. The instrument at that time was worthless, but now that it is properly organized, thanks to the medium and influence of our College paper, we may hope for better results.

Might I suggest that the undergraduates lay the whole question of reform in the Modern Language course before Convocation. They would certainly receive from it sympathy and assistance in agitating the question, and pressing it upon the Senate.

I shall leave the discussion of the advantages of Anglo-Saxon to those whose experience better qualifies them for the task, and I sincerely hope that the matter will not be dropped until this subject receives a place on the curriculum.

GRAD.

'DIDACTIC POETRY.'

To the Editor of the 'Varsity.

SIR,—In the last number of the 'Varsity, your esteemed contributor, Mr. Stevenson, did me the honor of referring to a word or two about the impropriety of the term *didactic poetry*, contained in a brief paper on the 'Tempest,' and somewhat mis-conceived my position when he stated that Mr. Lowell at any rate did not believe that *didactic poetry is a contradiction in terms*. There is a wide difference between expressions of philosophic truth and of poetic thought, and we must be careful lest while we are applauding the one, when it is accompanied by good versification, we think we have gained the other. Do not many of the quotations given by Mr. S. show this difference most distinctly? Still more is our position upheld when we consider the attitude of the poet himself. All poetry