

Contributions.

(We are not responsible for any opinions expressed in this column.—Eds.)

STUDENTS AND GENTLEMEN AND MEN.

The conviction that a man's actual belief on any subject of vital importance can in this age be more truthfully ascertained from his actions than his professions, seems to be deepening. If it be so, a few conclusions may be drawn with respect to college students, that if well-founded, are very suggestive. First of all, it is a fact worthy of explanation, that a considerable proportion of even graduates of colleges seem to have very little either of refined feeling or lofty moral sentiments. Many a man who takes a gold medal in classical or modern literature, enters a profession, and so far as those who meet him can judge, never betrays any real love for that branch of literature to which to all appearances when an undergraduate he was a devotee. Another difficulty needs explanation. How is it that so many men that have apparently that intellectual ability to master literature, or at least, literary forms, seem to embody so little of its refining influences in the 'outer man'? That such practices as are implied in the term 'hazing'—which seems to be a sort of epidemic, moral epidemic, of late among American Colleges, should thus prevail, affords sufficient grounds for these questionings. The conclusion seems inevitable that a large number of men resort to institutions for higher culture, who have no real capacity for such culture—no depth of earth—where there are strong neutralizing, preventing influences in operation; perhaps both.

There can be no doubt that a large number of men undertake professional study who have no special love for the professions they adopt; so much the worse for the professions, so much the worse for the men. But it is also true that men choose an Arts course with equally little love for science or literature. Admitting the fact, we must ask, "is there any remedy?" So long as an examination is made the sole standard by which men are to be accepted or rejected, barren souls will get into pasture. But it is a pleasing feature of the advance of the age to note that at some of the most progressive educational institutions of the world, examination is no longer the test in selecting students, for at least the more advanced study.

With respect to the Balfour Memorial Studentship in Science, soon to be established in England, it is distinctly stated that the election of the man to enjoy the honour shall not be by *competitive examination*; but that individual shall be chosen who seems *best fitted to carry out the objects of the studentship*.

But again, admitting that all those that matriculate are not just the sort of stuff that the Universities care to mother if better could be found to become her children, what can be done to improve the material now that it is on hand? We make a few suggestions:—

(1.) The establishment, as soon as possible, of conditions favourable to a genuine 'college life.' In America there is less of this than in England, and in Canada less than in the United States. Men attend classes at college, but it can scarcely be said they attend college. They know very little of each other outside of the classes, and that mutual reaction of mind on mind elsewhere is all but unknown to us. Until it exists it is difficult to conceive of the growth of that sort of culture which makes the gentleman and fills out the man. We deprecate the formation of *coteries* and *diques*, but we would hail with the utmost cordiality any means that would develop the social, the refined, and the manly in our students.

(2.) The formation and especially the hearty support of societies, both literary and scientific. These societies might become strong enough to secure the services of able men as lecturers, readers, &c., outside of the college and the city. A society calls upon a man for some exhibition and therefore some development of his individuality, which is apt to be lost sight of in the ordinary college work.

(3.) The interchange in various ways of intercollegiate courtesies, &c., &c., which would open the eyes of all to points of special merit possessed by others.

But it is not likely that these desirable results can be achieved so long as students remain content to be merely students, without aiming at being cultured gentlemen and rounded men. We need a change in our views of what is desirable. A college should not be considered an institution whose chief end is to quicken a man's wits so that he may merely act his way the better through the world attain a position, or amass wealth. He may do both without being any the less a gentleman or a man; indeed he is the more likely to do so, but should he attain neither high social position nor wealth, his life must not be considered a failure. Let us hope that in the future we shall have less preaching to youth of the doctrine of excelling other people and more of excelling the present general standard. Preach not to A. about excelling B., but of A.'s excelling his present self and striving after that symmetrical manliness implying mental, moral and physical development. In this country we need the lesson of patient steady toil, so well known in the older countries of Europe. We fret, we chafe, we fume. And for what? Often only to get free to use what we have for the commonest ends—to make money or attain social or other

distinction. After all, when we act thus, how much better are we than those that never entered a college? But that is not all—how much worse? Yet these things need not be; let us apply the remedies.

We are making some progress and some of its signs are visible at McGill. Here is a field for the noblest ambition. We may begin by pruning but we shall end in a more perfect growth.

T. W. M.

THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

Just at this time, when McGill has equipped another fleet and is about to launch it on the legal sea, the remarks of Ex-Governor Hubbard on "Professional Fame," would seem to us to be very appropriate.* Too often do we hear the profession of the law underrated, and even its practice declared inconsistent with that of Christianity. If such remarks were confined to rogues and rascals, who have just cause to deride what they must fear, we should not be surprised; but it is astonishing to find so many, apparently honest and certainly common-sense persons, carried away by this popular idea. Is it, that from their hurried judgment, they fail to distinguish between an evil, and the remedy necessary to cure such evil? It would seem so. For every day we hear this sophism, "Oh the Law! it only can have play when misfortunes and troubles befall us." Very true. But does it create these misfortunes and troubles? Is it not rather the prudent agent of Justice, ever ready to redress the wrongs which the blunders of others have caused? When a young man by some overt act has disclosed a talent of dubious merit, you will hear his friends cry out, "You would make a fine lawyer." Now why should this be? If those who are so prone to find fault were honest in their attacks, they would see that such tactics rather increase the evil they deplore, for many an otherwise bright intelligence has been thus deterred from entering the profession; whilst rogues have been led to think that in it they would find scope for their roguery, and in this way have swelled the ranks of the few who throw discredit on a noble profession. We hope that in the quotation which follows the members of the graduating class will see a prophecy of their own career.

Mr. Hubbard says: "To my thinking the most rigorous brain work of the world is done in the ranks of our profession. And then our work concerns the highest of all temporal interests: property, reputation, the peace of families, liberty, life even, the foundation of society, the jurisprudence of the world, and as a recent event has shown, the arbitration and peace of nations. The world accepts the work, but forgets the workers. The waste hours of Lord Bacon and Sergeant Talford were devoted to letters, and each is infinitely better remembered for his mere literary diversions than for his long and laborious professional work. The cheap caricatures of Dickens on the profession will outlive, I fear, in the popular memory, the judgments of Chief Justice Marshall, for the latter were not clownish burlesques, but only masterpieces of reason and jurisprudence. The victory gained by the Counsel of the Seven Bishops was worth infinitely more to the people of England than all the triumphs of the Crimean. But one Lord Cardigan led a foolishly brilliant charge against a Russian battery at Balaklava, and became immortal. Who led the charge of the Seven Great Confessors of the highest church against the English Crown at Westminster Hall? You must go to your books to answer. They were not on horseback. They wore gowns, not epaulettes. The truth is we are like the little insects that in the unseen depths of the ocean lay the coral foundations of uprising islands. In the end come the solid land, the olive and the vine, the habitations of man, the arts and industries of life, the havens of the sea, and ships riding at anchor. But the busy tribes which laid the beams of a continent in a dreary waste are entombed in their work, and forgotten in their tombs."

And further he continues, "We may justly console ourselves with the reflection that we belong to a profession which above all others shapes and fashions the institutions in which we live, and which, in the language of a great statesman, 'is as ancient as the magistracy, as noble as virtue, as necessary as justice'—a profession, I venture to add, which is generous and fraternal above all others, and in which living merit is appreciated in its day, according to its desert, and by none so quickly and so ungrudgingly as by those who are its professional contemporaries and its competitors in the same field. We have our rivalries—who else has more?—but they seldom produce jealousies. We have our contentions—who else has so many?—but they seldom produce enmities. The old Saxons used to cover their fires on every hearth at the sound of the evening curfew. In like manner, but to a better purpose, we also cover at each nightfall the embers of each day's struggle and strife. We never defer our amnesties till after death, and have less occasion therefore than some others to deal in *post mortem* bronzes and marbles. So much we may say without arrogance of ourselves—so much of our noble profession. No better proof and illustration can be found than in the life just closed—a life clear and clean in its aims; full of busy and useful labours; void, I dare believe, of offence toward God and man, and crowned in its course with that three-fold Scriptural blessing—length of days and riches and honour."

C. D.

* L. N. p. 25.

† William Hungerford.