

Young, who was always opposed to the realistic philosophy of Dr. McCosh whose disciple Mr. Baldwin is, and whose follower he is likely to be.

Now what are we to infer from the action of the government in making these appointments? Evidently one of two things, either that the authorities of the government are entirely ignorant of the character of the different systems of philosophy and therefore incapable of making a choice in the matter, or that they threw aside all principle and appointed these men because they thought that by so doing they would secure the greatest number of votes in the coming elections.

What then is likely to be the practical result of the teaching of these two different systems of philosophy in the same university? It is as follows: The student, in one hour, will be taught, that that object, for example, desk, is a thing-in-itself apart from thought, that object is reality; then in the next hour, he will be taught that the same object is not a think-in-itself apart from its relations, which are relations for thought, but is constituted an object for thought only by an act of thought. Which account is he to accept as the true one? If he is able (and about one student only out of a hundred is able) to work the question out, he is left in a very uncertain condition, without any solid ground on which to stand, and must necessarily assume a sceptical attitude towards everything.

LITERATURE.

TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN UNIVERSITIES.

BY PROF. CAPPON.

MY subject to-night is the teaching of English in universities. Some seven or eight months ago it happened that an appointment was being made in this department in a neighboring university, and as a consequence the correspondence column of the *Toronto Mail* were for a week or two filled with letters on the subject. Most of these letters enumerated the qualifications which, in the opinion of the writers, a university teacher of English ought to possess; and I, being myself a university teacher of English, was filled with admiration, not unmixed at times with terror, to see the very liberal notions which these writers entertained regarding the acquirements of a professor of English.

FIRST—He should be a classical scholar, and have been "bathed in the Thespian Springs," and "co-sphered with Plato" long enough to have acquired something of that fine sense which the ancients possessed in art and literature; and this evidently, in the opinion of some, was the main thing, the thing to make sure of, I mean, the rest being to them more or less a matter of course.

SECOND—He should be well acquainted, besides, with the languages and literatures of the great continental nations, France, Germany and Italy, for a knowledge of these was necessary in order to explain many important phenomena in English literature; and this rather, I could perceive, in the opinion of some, was the thing to make sure of.

THIRD—He should be a philologist, and should know, besides modern French, German and Italian, the following languages, Old High German and Middle High German,

Dutch, Danish, Icelandic, Moeso-Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Scotch, a Celtic language, Cyritic or Gaelic, and at least two provincial dialects of English. Such, or something very like it, was the list which one of the writers furnished. I am not sure about the Celtic language, but I am quite sure about the Scotch. This writer, I presumed, held strong views regarding the prominence which philology ought to have in the teaching of English. Other correspondents said something about the teacher's accent, one in particular requiring that it should be equally free from the American twang, the Canadian burr, (I think burr was the word) the Scotch drawl or the English lisp; some made suggestions regarding the teaching of compositions; some dropped remarks on style, on nationality, on a sympathetic temperament, on anything, in short, that occurred to them as a possible qualification or disqualification for the duties of this wonderful chair.

I do not know how the authorities at the university of which I speak regarded this somewhat discordant volume of public opinion. Possibly, as the way of academic authorities is in such cases, they did not regard it at all. But to me, at least, this gratifying fact was evident, that most of the writers had a high sense of the importance—the growing importance—of the English department in our universities. That was the harmonious note in the otherwise discordant volume; that was the meaning of the varied and almost conflicting acquirements demanded of the candidate for the chair of English.

But it was evident also from the exaggerated importance which some of the writers gave to some special faculty and from the loose comprehensiveness of others who demanded with indiscriminating emphasis every possible faculty and qualification, that public opinion as represented in these letters had no leading ideas on the subject. There was evidently no general agreement as to the relative importance of the varied attainments required of the English teacher.

What his chief duty is, and where consequently his main strength should be, especially if he be the single teacher of English in the university; what, in short, is the true function of English in our universities, that fundamental question, it seemed to me, had not been much considered by the writers.

PROF. FREEMAN'S OPINION.

By way of illustrating the difficulties which surround this subject, I shall begin by quoting the opinion of an eminent English scholar, Mr. Freeman, professor of history at Cambridge. Professor Freeman thinks that English literature should not be taught in universities at all, because it does not deal with facts, but is a matter of pure taste and opinion, on which there is no agreement, and again, because, in his opinion, it cannot be taught (especially because it cannot be crammed,) and, lastly, because it cannot be examined upon. These are his own phrases as they appeared in his article on the subject in the *Contemporary Review* of October, 1889.

The only things, in his opinion, which ought to be taught at universities are the historical study of the language in which the books taken in hand are written, and the comparative study of languages akin to it. That has, at all events, the merit of being a definite opinion about the function of English in our universities. Prof.