

dowed us all with the same tastes and talents. Add to this the fact that the objects of some studies are so diverse, requiring habits of thought in a measure antagonistic, and we cannot fail to recognize that optional courses are based on grave and solid reasons. It may be urged that the young student is not in a position to judge the studies for which he is naturally adapted; but he will very early manifest to his teachers the natural bent of his tastes and aptitudes, and it is the teacher's duty to guide him in the selection of his course. It must not be forgotten, either, that an optional course is obligatory in a sense; little is left to individual judgment. The University groups together kindred subjects, and while requiring of the student greater proficiency in the group or groups of his choice, obliges him to obtain a certain standing in others.

On the other hand, the very fact of having to study that for which we have no decided taste or even a positive dislike, is not without its good features. Not the least of these is the energy acquired in bringing ourselves to disagreeable tasks as well as to those more in accordance with our inclination. He will but poorly learn the great lesson of life who is incapable of mastering the caprices of taste. Moreover, precisely those faculties which are admittedly the weakest are the least developed by special studies. The proper time for specialties, therefore, appears to be after the general development afforded by an obligatory course of studies. Even where options are allowed, only the genius will attain eminence. Now, we hold that genius will make its way after all the aids of the University are withdrawn. Witness the case of Mr. Charles Baillargé, of Quebec. The most ardent admirer of Quebec collegiate education will hardly maintain that any great facilities are there offered for the study of mathematics, yet Mr. Baillargé discovered the prismoidal formula a discovery of immense practical value

and one of the most important additions to mathematical science made in recent times.

It must be borne in mind, also, when comparing the results of Protestant and Catholic university work, in the English-speaking world, that it is either Irish or foreigners who control our higher educational institutions. The former are just recovering from the effects of the penal laws, and are still laboring under the greatest of all difficulties—lack of means and leisure for intellectual pursuits. In a fair field these difficulties soon disappear, so we may expect in the near future a great advancement of higher educational work in Canada and the United States. Then shall the question of the arrangement of our collegiate courses receive a greater measure of attention, and in the light of experience a judicious combination of the two systems will be made, to meet the exigencies of the times and circumstances in which we shall find ourselves.

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*FINIS CORONAT OPUS.*

If we stand aside from the beaten track upon which the masses journey, and note the wide-spread tendency of the age, we will be forced into the admission that virtue is measured by the standard of utility; and, unfortunately, the mob it is that assumes the duty of judging virtue by this standard. Whatever does not, to its mind, conduce to man's pleasure, provide him with something that would fill to the brim the cup of sensual enjoyment, cannot receive its sanction or encouragement. Hence philosophy suffers from lack of patronage. For the educated mind, however, philosophy has charms of a deep and abiding nature; as well as a significance that is, in no way, lessened by the fact that the less cultured endeavor to frown down its importance and influence. With its importance, the student, who is