

handed out in regulation doses every day. And in regard to this, it is perfectly obvious, in view of the enormous extension which human knowledge, has now assumed, and of the large proportion of this which must be professed by a University of high standing, that the number of the teaching staff is a preponderating factor in determining the efficiency of the University. On this score, both the Scottish Universities and McGill have much to learn from the great Continental Universities. I may cite as an instance that the University of Berlin has a staff of 250 professors and lecturers who deliver annually 690 courses of lectures and have seven journals devoted to the publication of the original work done by the teachers and scholars of the University alone. So far as I know, the MCGILL FORTNIGHTLY is the only journal we have; and its contributions are hardly of the epoch-making character of those just mentioned.

Student life in Germany, England and Scotland, so far as the writer has seen it, while possessing of course many of the same essential features, differs much in the matter of social intercourse.

In neither Germany nor Scotland do the Universities afford such opportunities for intercommunication among the students as do Oxford and Cambridge. In Scotland the students live in solitary rooms, and see very little of each other outside the class room or laboratory. This undesirable state of things has now, however, some chance of being remedied by the recent establishment of a *University Union Society*, with a handsome building containing a large hall for debates and meetings, luncheon, smoking and reading rooms, a library and large gymnasium for the use of students paying a small subscription; as also of a *Students' Representative Council*, which was founded in 1884 in Edinburgh, and which has now also been initiated in the other three Scottish Universities. The aims of the Council are: 1, To represent the students in matters affecting their interests; 2, to afford a recognized means of communication between the students and the University authorities; and 3, to promote social life and academic unity among the students. The Council is elected annually at the beginning of the winter session, partly by the students of the different faculties and partly by the recognized students' societies. Meetings are held every month during the winter session, and the business then decided on is carried out by a committee consisting of 15 members. This Representative Council has been found to fill a long felt need, and has turned out an unqualified success. It may be that such a representative body of students might with advantage be elected at McGill. The establishment of luncheon rooms for students is a very real necessity here, and the writer is of opinion that such rooms could be worked, and a reasonably cheap and very good midday meal supplied to students through the instrumentality of such a representative council, who would hire a caterer to contract to supply the table and to provide waiters and plate, as is done in the Casino of the Technische Hochschule at Berlin. It will be found on inquiry that with rent free rooms, the matter is perfectly sound as a commercial undertaking.

In Germany the students are bonded together socially, as is well known in fencing corps; these are clubs, consisting of men hailing from the same parts of Germany, who meet together for convivial and other purposes. At these meetings they drink each other's healths or slit each other's noses with the greatest possible amount of ceremony. The quantity of beer that German students drink has been much talked of; but the writer would be inclined to say that their drinking is in the long run much less harmful than that of quite a large number of men at the English and Scottish Universities. The mild beer which is drunk is very much a secondary consideration, and the writer has passed some very pleasant evenings with the Mecklenburghers at Berlin, where the entertainment was often of a highly intellectual kind, consisting as it did of recitations or prepared speeches of one kind or another, very frequently with a splendid extempore accompaniment on the piano by the acknowledged musician of the club.

The ideal student life is with some slight modifications probably that exemplified at the great English Universities; and this is what we ought to look forward to for our University. So long, however, as the construction and endowment of Halls for McGill students to reside together in, as at Oxford and Cambridge, is unattainable, the best substitute we can have is a common luncheon or dining and news room, together with a series of entertainments, such as concerts, walking parties, debates, and so forth, organized and carried on by a Students Representative Council.

JOHN T. NICOLSON.

Alfred Tennyson.

Of all power, that of poetry is the least susceptible of abuse. Great bodily strength, the possession of political authority, wealth, and even talent, bring with them their temptations. They present themselves as the ministers and slaves of selfishness—point the road to personal gratification at the expense of others; and very often the mere fact of their possession alienates man from his brotherly feelings towards his fellow-man, and makes him either the petty tyrant of his narrow field or the destroyer of the welfare and hopes of nations.

It is not so with poetry as a power. Poetry is its own conscience; and the security for its being subservient to the interests of humanity lies in its own nature and tendencies. I do not call the talent of verse-making poetry; that, like other descriptions of talent, may be perverted to purposes of licentiousness or tyranny; but the perception of the beautiful and sublime in nature, the strong response to them in inward emotion, and facility of melodious utterance of that which is felt, so that the hearts of others are touched thereby: that is poetry. So long as it retains any title to that character, its tendency is to refine, purify, expand, and elevate; and whenever, therefore, you discover a true poet, there you find also, in as far as he is a poet, a friend of humanity, and an advocate (even unconsciously) of its rights, enjoyments and progress.

It is not possible, within the limits of the present