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UNIVERSITY FREEDOM.

It is altogether improbable that men of culture will ever come to any definite agreement concerning the scope and methods of academic instruction. So long as a doubt remains about the true purpose of University training, an approach to unanimity, as to the fittest means, is obviously out of the question. Moreover there are natural obstacles in the way of a satisfactory conclusion, on either hand, not to be easily, perhaps not to be at all, surmounted. Historical antecedents, social peculiarities, governmental systems, natural temperament and bent of mind would of themselves baulk us of the desired ideal. Without being unduly optimistic, it may be broadly laid down that at all events in outline, the system in vogue in England, Germany, France or Canada is the best for that particular country, under existing circumstances. The attempt either to fasten upon one type as universally adaptable, or to eclecticize by means of an arbitrary selection of incongruous features borrowed here and there, will undoubtedly fail. Clearly there can be no fixed and uniform scheme upon the subject, and the sooner that fact is conceded the better. Human nature is, at bottom, the same everywhere in one sense no doubt; but the forces which have moulded sections of it though the centuries have differentiated them indefinitely, to such an extent that to each belongs a natural history, a political history, and a social science of its own. The palm and the pine are both trees, and, for aught we know, may be the descendants of some primordial form, but the attempt to turn the endogen into an exogen would not be more fatuous than the effort to ignore the lines of demarcation which the conditions of their environment have drawn between alien races and nations.

The question of University freedom is precisely one of those which must be decided for each community by itself and not for it. The phrase is borrowed from an address, published some months since, by Professor MAX MULLER, himself the most catholic, as he is one of the most eminent, of scholars and instructors. It may not be unprofitable to consider a few of the positions assumed by Herr MULLER, and endeavour to ascertain how far his views are adapted to Canadian needs. It may perhaps appear in the sequel that what is suitable at Jena, Heidelberg, Paris or Oxford, may not be so well fitted for us at Montreal or Toronto. No attempt, it need hardly be said, is made to have to give any comprehensive view of the whole address referred to, much less to afford the reader even a glimpse of the wealth of learned illustration employed by the accomplished professor of Comparative Philology. There are three stages of education, he notes: elementary, scholastic and academical; or "primary, secondary, and tertiary." In the first, the elements of education in a rigidly dogmatic form are, so to speak, pumped, or, perhaps we should say, hammered into the child. Scholastic education may be obtained either by means of Grammar-schools or private tuition. The pædagogic element is still predominant here; but, by a necessary concession to mental development, the dogmatic element falls more into the background. There are some valuable remarks under this head on prevailing methods of classical teaching upon which there is not room to dwell. The chief point with regard to the second stage is that, during it, all the drudgery of mere school training ought to be undergone, and done with, once for all. In the University there ought to be perfect freedom. In what then, it may be asked, does University freedom consist? The answer may be given in the Professor's own words: "Academic teaching ought to be not merely a continuation, but in one sense, a correction of scholastic teaching. While at school instruction must be dogmatic; at the University it is to be Socratic, for I find no better name for that method which is to set a man free from the burden of traditional knowledge." In brief, the scholar ought to be docile and receptive, the student inquisitive and skeptical. How, then, is this sudden and momentous change in mental life to be effected?

To most of us it seems extremely unlikely that the metamorphosis is so easily made as Professor MULLER appears to think. The substitution of a Professor for a schoolmaster usually exercises a depressing effect, rather than an exciting one. Instead of being aroused to doubt, the undergraduate, in a majority of cases, is lulled into acquiescence. And this is especially the case, where, as in most new countries, the dogmatic

school *regime* must overlap the University method after Socrates. To proceed, however. The Professor has some weighty remarks on the inefficiency of mere lecturing. "Lectures are useful, if they teach us how to teach ourselves; if they stimulate; if they excite sympathy, and curiosity," &c. And this leads on to a very important matter for consideration. In England, according to Dr. MULLER, there is a lack of academic freedom, because there is too much of constant control. The English student is a suspected individual, constantly to be kept under professorial surveillance, lest he may scamp his work. To quote once more, it is often thought "that most of them, if left to choose their own work, their own time, their own books, and their own teachers, would simply do nothing." The imputation is, doubtless, a hard one, but not altogether without a basis of truth. There is too much of the perfunctory, and too little of the zealous and enthusiastic, pursuit of learning in England, no doubt; that, however, is not the teacher's fault. It is the inevitable consequence of that social prejudice which requires a degree to be got by hook or by crook, as one of the qualifications of a gentleman. In Canada, most young men who enter the Universities may be trusted up to a certain point, many of them *ad libitum*; but, inasmuch as the resources of our academic institutions are not unlimited, it is a matter of the highest importance that nothing shall be thrown away. What we need is, not so much freedom as well-directed control—by which is meant, not so much the harrowing of discipline as the fostering and stimulating breath of personal influence. Lecturing, doubtless, has its weak side; yet, unless entirely dissociated from its necessary adjuncts, it is far from being so ineffective an agency as some suppose.

There is only room, on this occasion, to notice, in brief, Professor MAX MULLER'S objections to that most powerful engine for intellectual levelling—*Examination*. From his point of view periodical examinations are a mischief from top to bottom, or rather, except at the top and bottom. He would consent to only two University examinations—one for matriculation, the other for a degree. His reasons are these: Examinations are the cause of "cramming," ill-digested, and from an educational point of view, absolutely useless. Prof. FAWCETT, a few weeks ago, spoke with equal authority, as a teacher and examiner at Salisbury, to the same effect. "There was too much reading," said the Postmaster GENERAL, "but too little thought." "Examinations," says Dr. MULLER, "are a tyranny, against which there is a strong feeling existing everywhere." This "cramping and withering" influence is slowly being understood, and the resulting mischief will before long be done away. There can be no doubt that there is much truth in these objections; but, in a practical country like ours, people desire to know how they may be deprived of their force. The Law Society, in establishing intermediate examinations, acted upon the imperious necessities of the case. To do away with examinations would not prevent cramming, here at all events; it would only increase the necessity for a more hurried and concentrated form of it. It is bad enough to cram for one year; but to make the process quadrennial, instead of annual, would only intensify the evil. In the matter of scholarships again, so far as Canada is concerned, we believe Dr. MULLER'S position to be untenable. We have no caste system here, and if higher education is to be nurtured among us, the Province must be prepared to pay for its dissemination in the shape of rewards to the deserving who are not wealthy.

WILLIAM J. RATTRAV.

So far as the perusal of some stray copies of the *Chronicle* and the *University* may support the surmise, there is an uncompromising spirit of fearlessness in the Michigan University press that goes far to atone for literary immaturity. The description of an incident, which occurred last April, may be adduced as an example in more than one sense of the term. "Last Friday evening the ladies of the medical class were informed that they could hear Professor PALMER'S lecture in the upper lecture room together with the gentlemen. While they were leaving the amphitheatre in that quiet, lady-like manner which the *lady* medics of Michigan University at all times and upon all occasions preserve, the gentlemen (?) of the class showed their good breeding, and their intellectual culture by clapping, stamping and hissing. We do not propose