

of knowledge a desire to gauge the depths of vice, whose heroes and standards for imitation are clever fools and men eminent in evil, who value the freedom of early manhood because it enables them to choose what is base and to reject and contemn what is good or noble; or who, if they fall short of this depth of folly, love to spend the precious days of youth in mere trifling and in frivolous amusements. There are still others who have no higher wish or object in entering college than to secure a trade or business in which they may earn more money or may have an easier life than in mere manual labor, and who would rather avoid than otherwise anything tending to make them more intelligent and better men. Such men lose what they can never regain, and that which no repentance can repair, for life is too short to remedy a misspent youth. Every hour of this precious time lost is a loss for ever.

This, happily, is not the usual case of the Canadian student. He may be, and generally is, to some extent, unaware of the value of the advantages within his reach. He may be no very frugal economist of time. He may indulge in some skepticism as to the use of what he learns. He may even entertain grave doubts and questionings as to the most assured beliefs and best established practices of his seniors, but, on the whole, he is a thinker and worker, and as such is in the right way; and, in McGill at least, we have had no occasion to complain of his character or conduct.

The Canadian student is sometimes inclined to underrate his own powers and advantages as compared with those of students abroad. Distance lends much enchantment to our view of foreign institutions, and familiarity leads us to undervalue those nearer home. In mental and physical development I think the Canadian student does not occupy a position of inferiority. He may fall short in previous culture and opportunities of familiarity with high and matured civilization. He may suffer a little from the absence of old educational traditions. He has, however, as great scope for mental development and more freedom in its attainment, as well as more accessible openings for the use of the power he may acquire. On the whole, the balance is not against him, and he need not doom himself in anticipation to any position of inferiority to his conferees in any part of the world.

The most difficult problem in his case is,

perhaps, the possible relation of the training he receives to the future developments of a new and ever-changing state of society; and in this he must trust to that good sense and adaptability to circumstances that should be a result of any good system of education. The methods of education in any age, though in some sense in advance, are sure to be in very important respects behind the requirements of that age to come on which the student is to enter, and this especially in times of change and progress. The student must, therefore, after he leaves college, learn very much which, if educators were prophets, and students perfectly amenable to their guidance, he might have learned earlier and at less cost. On the other hand, in a young and growing civilization like ours, the course of college training is far removed from the ordinary tastes of the people, and there is too little public appreciation of its uses, and a tendency to draw young men away from it to enter at once and without such preparation into the business of life. In these circumstances we should, perhaps, rather be surprised that so many enter on a college course, more especially the course in arts; and for this reason it is the duty of every university to hold out all legitimate inducements to intending students.

In the student days of those of us who were students in colonial colleges, say forty or fifty years ago, matters were very different from their present position. We had a severe and hard course of study, all the more severe that it was so narrow, with few options and few possibilities of attaining to honors or prizes. We had, however, on the other hand, few distractions. There was little light literature, the telegraph and daily press, the rapid movements of people on all sides, did not exist. We were not in a continual agitation of clubs, societies and games.

The modern student is in a very different position; in many respects better, in some, perhaps, worse. We have not arrived at the stage when, as in Germany, the student may select his course of studies for himself, nor even at the wide range of choice recently allowed in some of the universities of the United States, nor should we do so until the preparatory training of matriculants shall have been greatly advanced. Our idea is to give a general and uniform training in the earlier years, and when the student has attained to some knowledge of