

Science Studies, and the *University Circular*—have done a great deal, not merely to make the institution known to the world, but to develop intellectual life and stimulate original research within its walls. They are part of the recognized and regular work of the university and are maintained by the university funds. In the task of production teachers and taught work together, the aim of the former being not to overshadow but to co-operate with the latter, and to incite them to original investigation. If Toronto University had had even a single official journal in which to make known to the world the results of scholarly labors, the mathematical and physical achievements of Prof. Young and Prof. Loudon, and the biological researches of Prof. Ramsay Wright, might have been given to the public without applying to other learned bodies for a vehicle, with an untold loss of prestige to the University.

One of the most striking features of the teaching in Johns Hopkins is the prevalence of the historical method. I may illustrate this by a brief reference to the use made of it in teaching modern languages, including English. From a philological point of view any genuine local dialect in Great Britain, or Germany, or any of the Romance countries, is almost if not quite as important as the one which happened to become classical. It would, of course, be impossible to pay much attention to the dialects of England, France, or Germany during the undergraduate period, but the way is paved by paying a great deal of attention to the older stages of the classical language. The subsequent study of French dialects is greatly facilitated by a previous acquaintance with old French, and the same is true of English and German. So far from old English being regarded in Johns Hopkins as fit only for graduate study, every student who pretends to know the language at all is expected to know a great deal about it in its earlier, that is its pre-Chaucerian form. Reading old English and old French texts is part of the ordinary undergraduate work, the text-book for the latter being Bartsch's "Chrestomathie," and for the former the excellent series of selections compiled and edited by Sweet, Skeat and Morris. I am unable to say what the work in German will eventually be, as Dr. Wood, the former professor of English, has recently taken German and Anglo-Saxon as his department of the work.

Allow me in closing to make an announcement. Dr. Elliott, the accomplished Professor of the Romance Languages, spent a considerable portion of last summer amongst the Quebec *habitants*, and he is now at work on a book which will deal not merely with their dialects, to which he attaches a high philological value, but with their modes of life, their rapidly increasing numbers, and the ethnical problem which Canada has, in consequence of their presence, to deal with. The matter is one of interest even to the United States, where there is now a large French-Canadian population, and from my conversation with Dr. Elliott on the subject I feel safe in predicting a most interesting and instructive work from his scholarly pen.

WM. HOUSTON.

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THE PREMIUM ON SPECIALIZATION.

NO one can have failed to notice that much interest is being taken at the present time in the subject of educational methods. From our primary schools to our colleges, everything is being sifted, and ways of working and systems of education which had long been thought the best possible are being fearlessly criticised. Whether classics are necessary as part of a complete and satisfactory college curriculum, whether frequent examinations are essential to thorough collegiate work, whether it is well that attendance on lectures should be compulsory, how much freedom should be allowed students in choosing their lines of study—these are among the questions that thinking men are considering.

Nearly all our literary and educational journals have noticed the discussion that lately took place between Presidents McCosh and Elliott, on the methods of collegiate education. Many prominent educationists have expressed themselves as agreeing with one or other of these distinguished men or as holding a middle ground. The address of Col. Parker recently referred to in the 'VARSITY seems to have dealt ably with a kindred subject. I read with pleasure the remarks of the 'VARSITY in reference to this address, and with the general sentiment expressed there I cordially agree. There is no doubt that "our universities must ultimately adopt the principle of elective studies, that the revulsion from the old doctrine of rigid uniformity is widening and deepening every day." It is also quite true that there is now "a premium on specialization." It may occur to some that there might be a danger of putting this premium too high—so high that a "boom" might be the result which would be followed by the inevitable and injurious reaction. I should like to say a few words on this subject, especially in its relation to the University of Toronto.

No one doubts that a university should provide opportunities for

special study and research. All are agreed that a certain amount of general education should precede such special study or research. Presidents Elliott and McCosh differ as to the amount necessary. The former seems to think it possible for a sufficient amount of preparatory and general education to be obtained before matriculation. During all his undergraduate career, the student should be at entire liberty to choose his own course, restricting his attention to any lines or line he may see fit, only a certain amount of work being required. Dr. McCosh, on the other hand, holds that the general education given by an ordinarily varied curriculum, such as is found in the better American Universities, is not more than sufficient to prepare a man for the study of a special line. His theory is that the undergraduate should be obliged, even in his final years, to select a number of studies from a list of electives, so that the education he shall have at graduation shall be wider, if not so deep in one spot as it would be under a curriculum where one special line was pursued.

What is the position held by our university on this point? Theoretically, it is probably somewhere between the two. Our pass course no doubt would correspond more closely with President McCosh's idea of what a college course should be. But this is not the course on which Toronto puts a premium. The laurels are all to be found in the honor courses. And these are emphatically special courses. They differ from what President Elliott would favor in this—that while our students are at perfect liberty to choose which of the several honor courses they will pursue, a certain amount of pass work is prescribed along with each, which the men are bound to take. Whether fortunately or otherwise, it is a well-known fact that the pass matter does not constitute a very important item in the work of an honor man. In most cases it is crammed up as hastily as possible and forgotten very soon.

For convenience, we may make a division (not a very logical one) of university men into two classes—first, those who intend to pursue, as their life work, some special branch of learning either in teaching or investigation; second, those who intend entering one of the ordinary professions, law, medicine, the ministry or commercial life. In the case of the first class, the speciality must be taken up. The only question is at what period it should be entered on. Some say, as soon as possible, asserting that the general work required for matriculation, or at most that, in addition, covered during the first undergraduate year, is a sufficient preparation. Other education authorities, as we have seen, would place this period at the end of an ordinary arts course in college. They contend (and their arguments are strong) that not until the end of such a general course is a young man in a position to know for what special branch he is best suited; that the study of a number of various subjects is necessary to counteract or prevent the narrowing tendency of an exclusive devotion to one line; that all learning is so interwoven that one department helps another vastly, and the best and most trustworthy specialist will be the one whose education is at the same time as wide as possible. This is something like the position taken as we have seen by Dr. McCosh.

But when we come to the more common case of those whose purpose is to spend their lives in the more ordinary vocations, the question changes somewhat. We have then to make these two enquiries, (1) What sort of a course will best give the mental training necessary to polish and sharpen the mind. (2) What course will afford the greatest amount of practical assistance in preparation for the contemplated profession. In looking at the first of these questions, we do not wish to decide between the relative value of different special courses in affording mental training. The comparison is between any one of these, as a special course, and such a general course as is prescribed in many of the universities on this continent. The question is warmly contested by prominent educationists on both sides, and it would be presumptuous to attempt to decide off-hand a matter which involves so many psychological considerations. It will suffice, meanwhile, if we secure the admission that authorities are not agreed, and that there are good arguments in favor of the more general course. It will probably be allowed that if the study of a specialty tends to greater acuteness, a broader course will give more culture and wider sympathy.

Coming now to the practical assistance towards future professional work afforded by a general and a special course respectively, I may be allowed to speak from personal experience. I should be glad to know whether the experience of men in other professions tallies at all with my own. As a theological student, I find that the course which would be of most practical use should have been one in which were combined mental and moral science, classics, oriental languages, English and rhetoric. Instead of dividing my work about equally between these, all my energies were applied to the first. The consequence is that I find myself with a somewhat greater knowledge of metaphysics than is absolutely necessary, while I am much more deficient than I ought to be in these other branches. Nor do I stand alone here. I am quite certain that many of our graduates feel that the education they have at gradua