

not ordered to transport himself to Tomi, whither Ovid was banished some time later for a much s lighter, or rather, no real offence.

But if emperors were so easily gulled in those days, we have to thank the press in this nineteenth century that imitators and plagiarists cannot impose on us now with their ideas obtained at second-hand, and worked up for print in second-rate composition. You are, no doubt, curious about my meaning; let me, therefore, anticipate your conjecture as to the bearing of these remarks.

In your last issue there appeared an article from the pen of a writer of the class referred to above, whose whole originality seems to have been expended in the tedious process of transposing the letters of his name, which he was bound to put in some shape or other at the end of his effusion. Would that he had gone through this pleasing task after, instead of before, writing on Liberal Education. I confess to a wish that he had invested his article with a little more well-directed ingenuity, and that he had given us something more than a review of other men's opinions—for a much better penned exposition on the same subject appeared in the November (73) number of the *Popular Science Monthly*; but whether Jerkab Males drew on it for his knowledge, I will not venture to state, for, as you know, Mr. Editor, libel suits are too common to allow of my indulgence in too free-speaking. The reflection, however, that there is a great deal of similarity between the one and the other is irresistible.

If the writer in the UNIVERSITY GAZETTE has not already seen Professor Atkinson's paper, I should strongly recommend it to his perusal, and wish him more enlightened views on the subject than he seems to have already. But my business now is to correct one or two assertions in his article which are too glaring in their misrepresentation to be passed over in silence; and let it be understood that I would hardly have undertaken to do this, but that he seems to have written it as a direct refutation of my article on the Classics which appeared in the March number of the GAZETTE. Males is quite welcome to entertain and promulgate his opinions, crude as they may be; but when he makes false statements, it is the duty of every true friend of the University to set him right. I am sorry that in writing this I should shew myself on the side opposed to that "by no means unintelligent class" who believe that the old system is well nigh collapsed; but if I cannot be intelligent without joining that party, I would rather show myself in my true colours, and sail under the flag of those who drift down the stream that leads to the far past, where naught but the sound of "dead formulas" is heard, and nothing but antiquated accumulations gathered. It is some consolation, however, to think that the "antiquated" ones are still in the ascendant, and are likely to remain there so long as they have no stronger opponent to urge the cause of the reform than Jerkab Males.

I am quite ready to admit that the grinding theory as stated by him would have applied to a period of some twenty years back; but that the method of classical teaching is different now, it is almost needless to mention; for even the "old sticks" in the light of that truer psychology which pretends to investigate the laws of the juvenile mind have thought it advisable to mix the sweet with the bitter, and to make the strong tonics of the Greek and Latin grammars a little more palatable in their administration. A quarter of a century ago, the birch was the true accompaniment of the grammars; but in these days the bloody symbol is preserved only for the benefit of those refractory pupils who will not take quietly that which is good for the health of their minds. The great difference now is that in reading the classics, the aim of the teacher or professor is to make the schoolboy or student understand the author he is reading, and it is not his fault if the blockhead will not take any interest in his subject.

And even supposing the method of classical training had not been marked by a new era, do we wish for any better proof of the efficacy of the old grinding theory than will be given by an appeal to the loftiest minds of England, which are to be found in the greatest statesmen, orators and poets of that "tight little island"? And who are the teachers of the truer psychology but those whose minds were first strengthened by the grammars and abstract mathematics before they became the philosophers whose classical training gave them the thread by which to find their way out of the labyrinthine windings of Platonic subtlety or Aristotelian reasoning? If the old system has done its work, not only "tolerably" but surpassingly well for 150 years, there is no reason why for the next two or even two hundred centuries it should not do the same work just as well; for I am not aware that the development of the human mind takes place in any different

way now from what it did when nothing but classics and mathematics were taught in colleges. And still less was I aware that the minds of Canadians are so differently constituted from the inhabitants of the rest of the civilized world, as to make a different system of education necessary to wring off those "baneful effects," of which Jerkab Males writes without understanding what he means. Is Males as ignorant of the nature of a B. A. as some of your friends, Mr. Editor, who, after they have made up their minds that you are going in for the legal profession, inform you that you must be nearly a full fledged lawyer when you are well nigh at the end of your four years course in Arts? On what other plea than ignorance can he recommend that an Arts course in Canada should comprise nothing more than physical and natural science and mental and moral philosophy, while in England, the old system is still adhered to? And all this for the sake of "the hardy sons of toil," whose defective elementary teaching is to give them immunity from the regular course and to procure for them at the end, a degree on the same terms as those who have had a first-class school education to begin with. As it is, those who come up from the sixth form have to begin, in their first year, to be put back into work that they have done in the fourth form, for the benefit of those whose education does not extend beyond what they have derived from the common school. The question may well be asked why this unallayed class come to college when they know what they have to encounter, and when they are fully aware that their acquaintance with Latin and Greek is limited to three months. I should say that the criminality of their admission under such circumstances rests rather with themselves, and that the conduct of the authorities is to be censured only in so far as they allow such men to pass their matriculation. Let the men who, in after years, are to constitute the "nation's greatness," understand that McGill is not, or ought not to be a place where a school years at least to elementary training before they come up for their Arts course, or else take the consequences. It is absurd to suppose that they can blame anyone but themselves if they have to waste the prime of life over dry texts, from which if they only knew how to use them, they would gain a material advantage. If among the hardy sons of toil is to be found the "stamina and administrative talent" requisite to the nation's greatness, that is no reason why they should not properly prepare themselves for college or keep themselves away from a proper school because they are afraid of becoming alloyed in their intercourse with the youth of a public place of learning. We have heard of civilization tending to the degeneration of a race, but we never supposed that a public school was just the place to foster such a tendency.

For all their translations they are indebted to Mr. Bohn; not one in ten can translate properly five lines of Homer or Juvenal at the termination of their course." Then all I can say to Jerkab Males is that it is a piece of gross carelessness on the part of the examiners, that they allowed such men to proceed beyond their first year. But for the credit of the University I am happy to deny such a bold assertion. Either it is a most wilful misrepresentation of one who is bound to gain his point at any cost, or else he is as ignorant of the rudiments of mathematics as he appears to be of the classics. Let me by a small calculation set him right. By a reference to the calendar it will be seen that out of eight graduates last year, four took honours in classics during their course; this year I can answer for eight out of seventeen who would pass a creditable examination on the Greek and Latin literature of the past four years, and next year more than half the graduating class will consist of those who have already distinguished themselves in that branch of education. Such an estimate will give us an average of something over fifty instead of ten per cent., as the sanguinary perverter of the truth would lead us to believe, who could translate something more than Homer or Juvenal after they have obtained their Bachelor's degree. Such being the case I do not think that the time has yet come when we can afford to put the classics (mathematics I say nothing about, for to treat them in this way is out of the case.) in a subordinate position, however much it may be convenient to the "unprepared class" to have the prominence given to other subjects for which it is not so necessary to have a previous training. And seeing that the old grinding theory will run on in its old groove for many a long day to come, my advice to the disciples of Jerkab Males, is to submit with a good grace and to suffer a little contamination at the public schools, rather than send themselves off into consumption over their Greek and Latin texts at college.

Please insert this, Mr. Editor, for their benefit, and oblige their well-wisher,

G. B. W.