

"THE TIME IS SHORT."

"THE time is short!" no matter what we do,  
Stern Death will come and lay his grim, cold hand  
On us, and lead us into the dread unknown.  
"The time is short!" what use for us to strive  
After content or power, riches or peace?  
For, ever comes that message murmuring down,  
"Do what you will—all things must cease."

So, let us idly wait. Ah! no;  
Short is the time—*greater the need*—  
So work, to win our way; *then* at Death's call  
We go, willing at last that he should lead.

FERRARS.

Montreal.

THE MATTER OF UPPER CANADA COLLEGE.

FLAWLESS legislation seems more hopelessly out of human reach, if there are degrees of unattainability, than perfection in any other respect or direction of our strivings for it. Since government is but the net and general expression of our balanced imperfections as individuals, this is not, perhaps, remarkable; but in view of its potent influence upon national, as well as individual character, it is certainly regrettable. When human limitations were laid down in the beginning, the decree that made the greatest happiness of the greatest number a principle forever to be obscured by the practice intended to illustrate it, was in the nature of a tight, hard bandage across our prehistoric eyes. It has never been removed, and it never will be, for it is as old and as vital as selfishness; although, of course, there is not to be found in any legislative chamber a politician who will acknowledge the least imperfection in his vision. And, indeed, since it often sweeps a whole riding, it is comprehensive enough.

We are ostensibly engaged in an unending struggle for ideal government. That the struggle is fought out on party lines, and is in the nature of internecine war, is not permitted to throw any shadow of insincerity upon the motives that inspire it. That one half the nation should be compelled to wring a benefit to the whole by main force from the other half, is accepted as normal and reasonable. In this peculiar way, which is not without its justifiers, we have made such advance as that class interests were never more directly represented or more strongly defended in the government of the people than they are to-day. We have brought this about by liberal and more liberal franchise acts; and presently we shall ensure the flawlessness of the Governmental machine by putting the tools for its construction into the hands of all sorts and conditions of men. The right and the justice of this is apparent enough. The possible wrong and injustice of it lies *perdu* in the common impression that evils of legislation can be swept away upon the tide of universal suffrage. They change in form, but they are still rampant, and as long as there is a difference of opinion which amounts to a fight for existence between bodies of men the world over, they will be. When we have said that a democratic form of government, based upon every man's ballot, affords an opportunity for fair and righteous law-making, we have said about all in its favour that it is safe to say.

Every now and then we are reminded of a force, the tendency of which is toward nullifying that opportunity, the free and unfettered action of which points to a tyranny as remorseless and relentless as any despot's. We were reminded of it a few days ago in the Local House, when the member for North Middlesex gave notice of the motion to "abolish" an old, and in every way worthy, educational institution of the Province; we shall be reminded of it again and again before the debate which deals with its destinies closes. It is a blind, irrational, and dogged force, that is only beginning to awake to a sense of its own potentiality. It gathers momentum with time and knowledge of itself, and the member of Parliament who can rightly value its arguments, and resist its demands, when they encroach upon the rights of the minority—even the sinful rich—is better than he that taketh a city. He will also deserve and receive the gratitude of future generations who will see and know, better, perhaps, than we do the value of what has been saved for them out of the coarsely utilitarian wreck of this half-educated age. For to the voter who represents this power in the land, there is no beauty and no sacredness in the past or in its memorials. The site of Upper Canada College means so many shops and so much traffic to him; the old red brick buildings are a thorn in his iconoclastic side. His zeal for their demolition would almost induce him to take axe and crowbar in hand himself for the purpose, provided he were properly compensated for the loss of time. He has no shadow of respect for any claim which appeals in the least degree to sentiment for support, nor the least consideration for any institution,

no matter how slow and painful its growth, or how necessary its existence to any portion of the community, that does not afford any point of contact with his narrow existence. His action is also inspired by a petty and bitter jealousy of those who find an advantage in it. Circumstances have decreed that a common school education, terminating at fourteen or fifteen, shall be "good enough" for his boy. The son of no other man, therefore, shall have the benefit of any other if it can possibly be denied him. This person is not content to share in the blessings of liberty, equality, and fraternity; he wants to limit them. And this is the sort of person whose influence prompted the bill under discussion.

Besides this merely sentimental aspect of the question, which is not however, of such trifling importance as might be inferred, there are one or two other considerations that should be borne in mind in any discussion of the matter at the present juncture.

The College is *not* an institution, the entrance fee to which excludes all but the sons of rich men from its rolls. The entire charge per term is but \$52.50, or \$210 per year—a sum which would barely cover a boy's expenses at a High School away from home.

The institution has *not* outlived its usefulness; nor are there any fossil influences in its management. It is doing better work now, and more of it, than at any other period of its existence. It is full of vigour; it is abreast of all the most advanced educational methods of the day; it is thoroughly appreciated by the people of the Province, as the attendance amply shows, and its efficient teaching staff is headed by a gentleman who made his brilliant and thoroughly practical educational reputation in public and high school work in Canada.

The scope of Upper Canada College is *not* duplicated, as we often hear, by every High School in the land. There are few that approach it in the quality of one part of the work done, fewer that equal it; and none at all that attempt the other part—the formative influences on mind and character, and the development of individuality along its most promising lines, that is undertaken by the College, and undertaken most successfully. Without residence under collegiate conditions, there can be little or no opportunity for this.

The moral tone of the College is high. It is not a reformatory, nor does it prepare inmates for a reformatory. It receives no student rejected by the authority of Toronto Collegiate Institute or any other. Wealth and influence have no mitigating power over the discipline it exercises. The son of a millionaire has as little chance of remaining upon its rolls if his presence is inimical to the interest of the body of students as the son of the millionaire's clerk. Illustrations of this are not lacking.

The educational necessity of the College, even in the common and limited acceptance of the term, has *not* been done away with by the multiplication of High Schools throughout the Province. The latter would meet at present the needs of only one-third of the population, should the education they afford be generally taken advantage of.

The same advantages and facilities could never be given to the public at the same price by an unendowed institution. To "abolish" Upper Canada College would be to make the broad and liberal education it affords the exclusive advantage of the rich, for no man of moderate means could continue to pay for it. Another evil, the increase of denominational schools, anachronistic as they are in the present age, would immediately result from it, and people would be called upon, through the pulpit, to pay taxes for their support with which they are not at present burdened.

This institution is as necessary in its way to the formation of strong and creditable national character as any public school. It has gathered a moral force with age and dignity, and history and tradition, that nothing could replace. Its loss would be a direct blow to Canadian interests of the higher sort that we can ill afford to sustain. Let not the so-called democracy, hostile to the welfare of all in whose affairs it is too blind to see its own deep concern, strike this blow.

S. J. D.

IN ABSENCE.

THE secrets of the gray and wise old sea,  
Her carven shells may murmur unto thee,  
For thee the lilies incense may unseal,  
And white and golden loveliness reveal.

Yet not more musical the carven shell,  
And never sweeter the pure lily's bell,  
Than songs that would arise from heart-depths clear,  
To greet thy presence, an' thou wert but here.

S. J. D.