

lizing power shall have rescued all men from thralldom of sin and ignorance.

The lecture, which was throughout of a high order, was listened to with marked attention by a large and appreciative audience. Dr. Hopper's elegant language and breadth of thought render him an exceedingly pleasing and instructive lecturer.

○ Correspondence. ○

THE MARKING SYSTEM.

MESSRS. EDITORS,—That there are errors in our system of college education most persons will admit. But it is one thing to admit an error, and quite another thing to reform it; and in the demands for positive reform we strike the first root of bitterness. Some one has aptly said that "our college system rests on nothing and ends on nothing." It certainly rests on no broad basis of well-graded public schools. But it is not now my purpose to discuss its basis, rather some phases of the institution *per se*.

In order to do college work two elements are necessary—teachers and students. But the true position of the first is often lost sight of, while the second is liable to be ignored altogether. The teacher is made to do service as a janitor, a monitor, or moral policeman to the exclusion of his true functions. Too often what he would teach is lodged in the silent depths of the text-book rather than in his own being, where Carlyle would have it that he might be a successful teacher. The student who was nothing but Smith at school is told, on entering college, that he is Mr. Smith, and may expect to be treated as a man. But he soon wakes up to the fact that this was a harmless joke. In reality he has to submit to a code of rules in which mental and moral transgressions are jumbled in such a manner as would scarcely do credit to the most primitive forms of government. He must be watched and suspected until he makes himself worthy of the suspicions. Indeed he can work on no independent basis of action; and in the truest sense is not made to recognize his individual responsibility.

Now, I can scarcely think the aims and ends of a college education are so fleeting and shadowy that actual knowledge of its advantages must yield to belief on the mere assertion of some out-

side authority. It is well known that Navigation, for example, is not studied in college for the express purpose of making a practical application of its principles. The college course is a *liberal* one: and some of its objects should be to discipline of the intellect; to free the mind from prejudice; to prepare it to detect error, and accept truth; and to create the power to labor. The means by which these are attained are not yet perfected. Some, which were once useful, are from changed condition of things now merely ornamental, or, rather, the actual *impedimenta* of the system. Of this nature is the daily marking system, which so largely obtains in our colleges, and to which, with your leave, I wish to take some exceptions.

Under this marking system what is the main end of study? Perhaps to learn, rather to make a good mark. You may not be willing to admit this; neither would the miser admit that to hoard money was the end toward which his efforts were directed. Probably it was not the real object of life at the start. The conscientious professor must have the fatal paper before him, and while the student recites he balances this slip of the tongue, that want of knowledge, in fact, each phase of the recitation with that made by a rival student; for he does not wish to do involuntary injustice to any. And the student who sought for help, and looked for inspiration finds neither; while the professor is degraded from the high position of teacher to a recitation hearer and a marking machine. But suppose the marking system offers an inducement to study. Is there no greater temptation the teacher might present, no higher plane to which he might lead the student, no loftier incentive to young ambition, than merely to make a good mark? In a country like ours, with its ever opening, ever widening avenues for distinction and success, certainly the appeals to the lower aims, which the marking system implies, is not the best or most powerful that can be made to the Canadian student. There need be no lack of motives. The student instinctively recognizes his superiors, and will be led by them without the aid of that refuge of incapacity—the marking system. There are too the ulterior motives, backed up by living examples, that the best informed are the most successful; that it is the diligent student who may stand before kings; that power—held in trust—but still power is the reward of thorough preparation. Motives like these reach with a higher and better influence on the student, and