

12

292

7



3 9004 01303133 8



## SCHOOL AND COLLEGE.

---

### TWO EXPERIMENTS IN UNIVERSITY EXTENSION BY A CANADIAN UNIVERSITY.

PROFESSOR ADAMS, in a recent article on American pioneers of University Extension, says that perhaps our American colleges will discover some day that they have all been engaged in University Extension without knowing it, just as M. Jourdain found to his surprise that he had been talking prose all his life. Few men know more than Professor Adams of the new movement which has recently aroused some sanguine hopes that a royal road to universal culture has at last been found, and no one gives a more exact account of what has been done or a more sober estimate of the proportion of successes to failures; but I am afraid that the illustration from Molière is calculated to foster a delusion which, if not dispelled, may do mischief. M. Jourdain's prose was the real thing; but what resemblance has an average course of popular lectures, even when given under the most learned auspices, to university work? Believing that it is desirable to have as much of the real article as possible, we must begin by estimating shoddy imitations at their proper value.

What is the aim of the university teacher? The same as that of every true teacher, only that he has the great advantage of addressing young men capable of thinking instead of boys and girls. His aim is to educate his students or make them think for themselves. This means hard, continuous work, so far as they are concerned, and only a select few care for that kind of thing. It is much more pleasant to have others do the

work, while we look on and fancy that we are taking an active part in it because we give an occasional cheer. We depart and straightway forget even what kind of work it was. All mental work means a strain that the ordinary man shrinks from. Thinking exhausts us as nothing else does. Chopping wood or digging drains is nothing to it, and therefore the wise professor knows that he must take a great deal of trouble if he is to get his students to be anything more than spectators, listeners, or memorizers. He insists on their doing work, and he calls upon them in unexpected ways. He tries all kinds of methods. He has the whip-hand of his class, too, for every one in it knows that his work is sure to be tested in some way or other, and that he has no chance of getting the hall mark unless he passes the test successfully. It does not do to crack the whip continually over the head of horse or man, but the knowledge that there is a whip in reserve does no harm and in some cases does good. It may be said that there is a great deal of indifferent or positively bad teaching in universities. That is perfectly true. But it is bad in spite of all the traditions and all the means that the average teacher has at his disposal, and how is it going to be bettered by dispensing with these?

If the new movement is to succeed it must be genuine. Only work that is entitled to university recognition should receive the name of University Extension. Clearly then it must, as in England, be kept in the hands of the universities. Their work is one thing. A popular lecture course is another thing altogether, and while there is a demand for that, there are parties in the field — with whom it would be hopeless to try and compete — who are abundantly willing to supply the demand. We must also hasten slowly and be content to foster a taste for study instead of expecting large results in a short time.

As the movement is still in its infancy perhaps the best thing its friends can do is to tell their experience. In this way they may give one another hints. Here, then, is ours, without the slightest reference to the pleasant lectures that were the rage twenty years ago, and which — like the Mechanic's Institute of a previous generation — were expected by some worthy souls

to be pioneers of a millennium of enlightened and regenerated working-men.

1. It is well known that London University was established chiefly with a view to extra-mural students. Candidates for a degree are to this day examined on the work of Pass and Honour courses without attendance upon classes, and it matters nothing to the university whether they have prepared at unchartered schools and colleges or at home. Seven years ago, Queen's resolved to try and better this example. We have in the Province of Ontario public schools, and above these about one hundred and twenty high schools, with twenty thousand pupils who had to pass an entrance examination before being admitted. Five or six thousand leave the high schools annually, of whom rather more than one thousand proceed to universities or professional colleges. This leaves a large number that may be supposed to have some taste and fitness for farther study but not the means of gratifying their taste. To this class of persons we not only offered permission to come up for the regular university examinations that lead to Degrees in Arts if they matriculated, but we also promised assistance by the professors or tutors attached to the different departments of study. For example, in English language and literature a correspondence class was formed, and in connection with it a special course of lectures given, the purpose being to suggest methods of analysis and criticism. This course was voluntary, and a corresponding tutor was appointed to communicate with extra-mural students who might wish to take it. A written copy of each lecture was sent to the student every fortnight, and an exercise prescribed which he had to write and forward to the tutor within the same period. In the other departments of study the weekly exercises of the class were sent to the extra-mural students, or they were required to make themselves familiar with prescribed text-books and to write essays in connection with these and send them in at fixed dates.

The results of this experiment have been all that we expected ; but we did not expect much. We knew the difficulties that this class of students would have to overcome. Some subjects,

such as philosophy, cannot possibly be crammed, and even works like Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Mill's *Utilitarianism*, or Herbert Spencer's *Data of Ethics* are formidable to men who have no opportunity of hearing lectures and asking questions. Other subjects, like botany, geology, zoölogy or physics, can be studied successfully only when there are opportunities for practical work or supervision in a laboratory or dissecting-room. It is not to be wondered at, then, that not more than thirty extra-murals register annually, and that the number shows little tendency to increase. A large proportion fail to pass the annual examinations, and as we have not, in the United States or Canada, the inducements that China offers to successful candidates, most of the failures drop out every year instead of continuing to old age, as they do in a kingdom where success in passing is the entrance to appointments in the public service. A few have already graduated, and others are on the way. These, it must be said, are exceptional men, and imbued with a love of learning for its own sake. Difficulties do not frighten them, and each success stimulates them to further efforts.

This first experiment, which I have thus explained, is of course, so far as it goes, genuine University Extension; but the limited response that has been given to the generous offer made by the university is surely significant. Evidently even the majority of the young men and women who leave our high schools seem glad to get away from the necessity of further study. Goodbye to books, except it may be to novels or literary lemonade of other kinds, is the cry of their hearts, that is, if we are to judge by their intellectual inaction. It should not be so. These presumably well-trained students might be expected to be anxious for more light. They should be pressing in at every open door. They should be full of enthusiasm for learning, and eager for their own full intellectual enfranchisement. But they are not. The fault may be theirs or it may be in our system or in their teachers or in the environment or in the spirit of the age or of a new country. But the fact is that few continue their studies, and that the majority of these have bread and butter inducements. They are teachers, and wish to get better

positions in the profession, and a university degree opens the door to promotion. There is, of course, nothing blameworthy in this, but neither is there anything peculiarly praiseworthy.

2. Our second experiment has just commenced, and it is rather noteworthy that it has risen out of the success of the first. This is a pretty good sign that it is a legitimate development. Anything that comes by evolution is likely to be the right thing at the right time. One or two of our Ottawa graduates, who had obtained their degrees through extra-mural study, valued the education they had received so much that they resolved last summer to form classes on University Extension lines in their own city, the capital of the Dominion, and when they appealed to us for our co-operation we readily consented, and met them more than half-way. So far as I know this is the first case in which a Canadian university undertook to send its professors and tutors outside of its own seat, to do anything like regular university work; though recently the University of New Brunswick, whose seat is in Fredericton, has decided to open courses in St. John, and has published a scheme of lectures in ten different subjects. It has also enlisted in support of the undertaking the best local talent, and the very large number of earnest, intellectual people in St. John is a guarantee of success. Most of the lecturers have no direct communication with the university. The university has, I think, acted wisely in securing the support of outsiders as teachers, and we shall doubtless before long follow this good example.

What measure of success is likely to attend our venture I shall not attempt to predict, but in my opinion the great danger to be avoided here and elsewhere is that which was referred to at the outset of this article. People are so apt to judge of success by mechanical standards that the friends of the movement may offer inducements to attract numbers. Now numbers are just what must be avoided at the first, if anything serious is to be attempted. I happened, quite unexpectedly, to be in Ottawa on the day when the first lecture of the first course was to be given, and learned to my dismay that it was to be in the city hall, that the chancellor of the university, Mr. Sandford Flem-

ing, was to be in the chair, and that his Excellency the Governor-General, and other brilliant people whose countenance is sought when it is desired to make anything fashionable, were to be present. Knowing that Professor Cappon, who was to give the inaugural lecture, sympathized with my own conviction that the movement is likely to end in smoke unless real educational work is attempted, and that such work cannot be done at a public meeting where three-fourths of the people expect to be easily interested and perhaps amused, I was curious to know how he would meet his audience. He proved himself equal to the occasion, and his introductory remarks were so much to the point that they are well worthy of a still larger audience. After courteously acknowledging the presence of Lord Stanley and the distinguished patronage under which the lectures were to be given, he proceeded somewhat as follows:

“But I must tell you frankly that the very public and formal nature of this meeting embarrasses me considerably. I came here to-night prepared to meet a class which I could treat on the easy, familiar, confidential terms in which a university tutor discourses of his subject to a limited and specially prepared audience. In the words of your secretary, Mr. Cowley, I was to give such a lecture as I should give were I commencing work with a class in college. Accordingly, I have come before you to-night without any special preparation for such a meeting as this. The lecture I have brought with me was specially written and designed for an academic audience, that is, an audience prepared to go into a perhaps somewhat dry and scientific analysis of the subject, an audience prepared for the serene delights of research. Perhaps the present audience is all of that character. I do not know, but I am afraid that those who have in their minds the traditional popular lecturer, especially in the field of literature, will be sadly disappointed. I do not profess to do any work of that kind at all. After considerable experience and thought, I do not find that the popular method of lecturing leaves any solid results behind it; much less, at any rate, than those which are aimed at by the University Extension Movement.

“I have seen a good deal of this movement in the Old Country. Some seven or eight years ago I was an extension lecturer in connection with Glasgow University, and I know that my experience was in general the same as that of my colleagues and fellow-workers. We always started off well in a new place. The classes were largely attended, and often numbered from eighty to a hundred hearers. I will not call them students, for a glance at any of the class-rooms would have told the experienced lecturer that two-thirds of the audience came there prepared perhaps to listen attentively, prepared even to read some works by way of assistance, but not at all prepared to study the subject as a student of chemistry or philosophy or language at college is prepared to study his subject; rather expecting to be interested and amused by the lecturer, while remaining themselves in a highly passive state. The result was that we all made our lectures as popular as possible. We drew them up in the traditional popular style: a slight biography of the writer to start with, an interesting anecdote or two, a general survey of his work and its relation to the age, some special criticism, not too systematic or philosophical, and affecting passages for recitation.

“The courses were generally thought to be great successes. I have a very pleasant memory of the complimentary things we, the lecturers and the audiences, used to say of each other at the conclusion. There were pleasant afternoon teas, drives, an occasional dinner, and so forth. It was pleasant, and not unprofitable on either side, but it was not exactly what it was supposed to be,—the extension of university teaching to those outside the university. None of us could say that the teaching had the same solid and thorough quality of that done by the same lecturers within the university walls. None of us could say that any of the extension pupils made anything like the progress, or got anything like the same hold of the subject as the better students in a class within a university.

“Perhaps it was our fault, perhaps we ought to have trusted more to the scientific and philosophic spirit of our classes; but it is hard to treat a subject with scientific precision and detail

before an audience, one-half of whom you are privately convinced expects to remain passive while you amuse and interest them. However that may be, after my term as extension lecturer was over, I resolved never to undertake any more work of that kind, unless it were clearly understood that the work was to be in all essential respects the same as that done within the university, and done in a tutorial *quasi*-Socratic style, which is that of all the best university teachers of to-day, and the only effective method. Then we shall be able to say that our work is truly an extension of the university to those outside, that it has all the essential qualities of university work, and may be taken as an effective substitute by those whom circumstances may not permit to attend the university. And perhaps it may be that in time the universities may recognize it as an equivalent, *pro tanto*, of their own work. In this way we may be able to spread the benefits of real training throughout the length and breadth of the land, and effect a development of the universities in genuine accordance with the spirit of the age." ✓

After these very frank introductory remarks, Professor Cappon proceeded with his first lecture, which — in spite of his warning — the audience generally found extremely interesting, although — as few of them had come prepared to take notes — they have probably forgotten it long ere this. At the close of his lecture Lord Stanley spoke with great good sense along the same lines on which the professor had uttered his warnings, pointing out that the fundamental principle of all education is that a man must educate himself, and that his own reason for coming to the meeting was that he had been assured that genuine educational work was to be attempted. This, he said, could only be done if questions were asked on the subjects of the lectures, notes taken, prescribed books read, and regular examinations held. The following morning I attended the second lecture, which was given in a smaller hall with a blackboard and something of the look of a class-room. The audience, to my great delight, had as a whole a different look from that of the night before. Only between fifty and sixty were present, but almost every one of them was furnished with pencil and note-

book, and, as the professor led them on, occasional questions were put that showed that their own intellects were at work. The lecture and conversation lasted for nearly two hours, and I came away persuaded that genuine work could be done in connection with the University Extension Movement, if only those in charge of it can manage to steer between Scylla and Charybdis.

G. M. GRANT.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, Kingston, Canada.

---

TO A COLLEGE PRESIDENT.

Just for an instant, anger, scorching hot,  
Blazed out in look and word ; then died. And you  
(Because reply meant littleness and not  
Because the taunt flew by) apologized, as few  
Could, for that instant's heat. You never taught  
From books a lesson half so plain, nor drew  
Such potent wisdom from old classic thought.  
Each man among us felt he never knew  
Till then, how much sheer self-control could mean  
Nor yet an insult's true utility.  
No other way had we so clearly seen  
Your character's supreme nobility.  
Nor could aught else so eloquently plead  
For full acceptance of your Christian creed.

A. S. BRIDGMAN.

SOUTH AMHERST, Mass.





