

John Stuart Blackie

On the Advancement of Learning in Scotland

A Letter to The Right Honourable The Lord Provost
and Town Council of Edinburgh, Patrons of the University

Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox, 1855.

An original of this is in a bound volume entitled "University Pamphlets" in Glasgow University Library, shelf mark B457 1852-B. The URL of this PDF scan is:

www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/resources/2010-Blackie-Learning.pdf

J.S. Blackie was Professor of Greek at Edinburgh University for some 30 years and a friend of the people, especially Highland crofters. He was a key figure in the Celtic Revival and in establishing the Chair of Celtic at Edinburgh University. Amongst some great lines scattered through this paper are, "We demand a scholarship with a large human soul, and a pregnant social significance" (p. 10).

A modern biography is "John Stuart Blackie: Scottish Scholar and Patriot" by Stuart Wallace, Edinburgh University Press, 2006. Other papers I've scanned, to honour Blackie's inspiration for our times, are:

J.S. Blackie's Inaugural Lecture, "Classical Literature in its Relation to the Nineteenth Century and Scottish University Education," at:
www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/resources/2010-Blackie-Inaugural.pdf

"The Scots Renaissance" by Patrick Geddes, which opens with a moving account of Blackie's funeral, demonstrating his public esteem, at:
www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/resources/2010-Geddes-Blackie.pdf

A listing of other rare 3rd party scholarly resources I've posted is at:
www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/resources.htm

Alastair McIntosh, April 2010.

ON THE ADVANCEMENT

OF

LEARNING IN SCOTLAND:

A LETTER

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD PROVOST
AND TOWN COUNCIL OF EDINBURGH,

PATRONS OF THE UNIVERSITY.

BY

JOHN STUART BLACKIE,

PROFESSOR OF GREEK.

EDINBURGH: SUTHERLAND AND KNOX.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.

MDCCCLV.

ON THE ADVANCEMENT
OF
LEARNING IN SCOTLAND.

I COUNT myself happy this day, Respected Patrons, in using my privilege as a Professor of the University of Edinburgh, to address a few words to you on a subject which has long been dear to my heart, the Advancement of Academical Learning in Scotland. For though much has lately been said both within the walls of our University, and beyond them, on that strange anomaly of our academical constitution, whereby a corporation of men professing arts and sciences, is made subject to the governing control of another corporation, consisting chiefly of individuals making professions of a very different kind; yet there is fundamentally nothing in this anomaly more strange than in the institution of trial by Jury,—the keystone of our criminal law, and the palladium of our English liberty; and, in point of fact, I have never learned that the practical working of this anomaly has been otherwise than beneficial to the best interests of science and learning in this metropolis. It has been the peculiar misfortune of the Universities of this British land, generally, that they have been left a great deal too much to themselves—that is to say, to all the meagreness of a purely professorial and professional control; a state of things which,

“They, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”—ST. PAUL.

*ἑαυτοὺς ὡς τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ
ἀναλογίζονται ὅτι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ὑπερέβησαν.*—PLATO.

“We are weak throughout, because weak radically.”—DR. CHALMERS.

by the laws of God, leads directly to that ossification of a pedantic routine, and that tyranny of a minute formalism, which reached its culminating point in the unreformed academical systems of Oxford and Cambridge. In Scotland, while the necessity of subserving popular needs preserved the Universities from working themselves, under close corporative influence, into such flagrant caricatures of nature and common sense, there was at the same time the evil always felt—and where not felt, only so much the more deadly,—of several privileged corporations of public teachers, controlling the highest education of the land from a purely corporate and scholastic point of view, without any tangible power from without, either to help their struggles when they were right, or to correct their prejudices, and soften their asperities, when they were wrong. Edinburgh, however, under the combined influences of a sympathetic public, a metropolitan position, and a municipal government, has been more free than any other Scottish University from those evils which necessarily result from the narrowness of a purely professorial government; and, however I may imagine to myself, and could no doubt sketch out on paper a court of academical control, composed of elements far more scientific-looking than those which compose the present Town Council, I am far from certain, that, under the corrupt personal influences and party regards which are constantly at work in the public business of this country, a body could be brought into action more effective for most purposes of academic control than that which now exists. At all events, I am well content that I have to plead the cause of the higher learning in this country, not before a convocation of academic Dons and Doctors, all crisp and cold with the thickly crystallized prejudices of a thousand years, but before an assembly of Scottish merchants and professional men, living and breathing in the stirring atmosphere of the

present, who, if they do not understand Greek, and feel no longing for Chinese, are at all events not sworn to dismiss common sense from their bar unheard, and to cause nature, like Astrea in the old fable, to leave a world of academical conceit and perverseness to the enjoyment of its own select deformity. When I address myself to the Lord Provost and Town Councillors of Edinburgh, I am at least sure that my words are sent into the ears of men both willing to hear, and by their very position, pledged to help me, if I only place before them a plain, a practical, and a moderate proposal. And, whereas, on former occasions, when I have endeavoured to lay the case of our Scottish Universities before the general public, I have received little more in return for ample disbursements of reason, than a large amount of apathy, a few drops of benevolent pity, and a sharp seasoning of ignorant reproof, on the present occasion, I mean to place the matter in such a tangible form before such a definite body, that I must receive a categorical answer to my demand, either Yes or No: if Yes, well; if No, I have at least delivered myself of my message fully; and the guilt of continuing longer to act in matters of the most serious public concern, under the guidance of principles that directly controvert the plain laws of the human mind, and of social progress, will lie at whose door it may—My hands are clean.

The proposition which I shall have the honour of laying before you, has reference solely to the Greek Classes, not because I am touched by any one-sided admiration for that branch of learning, but because that only is the province which you have assigned to me, and with respect to that alone, I have both the privilege and the duty to appeal to you, my masters, and through you, to my fellow-professors and to the public. But as the special question of the proper conduct of Greek Classes is one that cannot be rightly comprehended

without a distinct perception of the present condition of Academical learning in Scotland generally, and the more glaring defects of our Academical machinery, I have been necessitated to make a broad and large statement of the whole subject, which will at once cut off those petty quibbling objections that are always ready to be thrown in the way of a distinct and effective measure, by men of themselves too small to conceive a large principle, and too low to rise to a lofty purpose. My first business, therefore, is to clear the way for a plain measure of Reform for the Greek Classes, by a true and unvarnished exposition of the state of learning in Scotland, with a short indication of the causes by which that state has been produced, and the measures of more general Reform by which alone it can be improved.

What do we understand by LEARNING? The word is vague; and some irrelevant criticisms and pert objections may be anticipated by defining the term distinctly in the outset. A farmer who tills his ground skilfully, and, by the blessing of God and favour of the elements, stores a large crop of life-sustaining fruit in his garners, is not a learned man; he is a man of skill, industry, and experience. The same farmer, if, in addition to the careful and skilful cultivation of the soil, according to the received customs of the agricultural profession, he occupies himself with experimenting in various ways so as to produce important agricultural results by the application of new chemical or other scientific principles, may be called a scientific farmer; or, if you please, an intellectual or a speculative farmer; but no man would think of calling him a learned farmer. Let him, however, in addition to the scientific accomplishments which we have just supposed, be found at his leisure hours, with the help of dictionary and commentary, spelling his way through the Georgics of Virgil, the authors *De Re Rustica* of the Romans,

and the geoponic writers of the Greeks, we should then have no hesitation in saluting him as a *geoponus eruditissimus*, a learned agriculturist and a wonder of the country-side. In the same way, any man who can make a neat incision into your blood-vessels without mistaking an artery for a vein, may be called a skilful phlebotomist, and if he does so in difficult cases, and in the most approved way, he may be called a scientific phlebotomist. But the man who not only can finger a lancet, but will explain to you the whole theory and history of blood-letting, from the precepts of earliest Egyptian drugmen in pre-Homeric times, to the diætic protests of Erasistratus of Ceos in the third century before Christ, and the heroic practice of a stout Broussais and Gregory, of the most recent memory; such a man who, to great practical skill and dexterity, adds extensive knowledge of the past, well arranged and digested by the organic power of ideas, you would call both a learned and a philosophic phlebotomist; you would be justified in making such a man a professor of phlebotomy. You see, therefore, what learning means; it means knowledge of what has taken place in past times, such knowledge as now-a-days is generally obtained, and, for the most, can only be extensively obtained, through the medium of books. You see, also, what learning does not mean; it does not mean mere practical skill; it does not mean science or the thorough and correct knowledge of anything that a man may know by the mere use of his eyes and his reflecting powers, without any reference to the experience of the past, or any facts and ideas communicated to us through written tradition; as little does it mean poetry or literature; for these, though sometimes the bearers of bookish tradition, are as often the mere exponents of the living present, and perhaps not the least valuable when they are so. You see further, that it is not identical with philosophy, though in the natural

course of things certainly very closely allied to it; for man being not merely a cognitive, but a reasoning being, has, unless when suffering under the influence of some artificial pressure, a strong natural inclination not merely to collect all manner of facts far distant in space and time, but to compare them, to speculate on them, and to educe the great laws of cosmic development from this comparison; to do which is to philosophize. Learning, therefore, in the natural and healthy action of the human mind, includes philosophy; as conversely philosophy includes learning—for very few minds are of such extraordinary subtlety, and of such extensive reach, that they can evolve the whole laws of the great world of thought and feeling, merely from a survey of their own mind, and the persons and objects with whom their mind is brought into contact in the course of the narrow and partial experience of a meditative life. If philosophy be necessary duly to appreciate the historic materials which learning supplies, learning is equally necessary to prepare a broad and sure foundation of reality for that vast and sublime edifice of human ideals, which it is the pride of philosophy to uprear. When I talk of learning, therefore, in the present paper, I always understand that it exists, as I believe it always will do in Scotland, in living combination with a searching, a sharp-sighted, and a comprehensive philosophy.

These remarks, though of a general nature, will not be deemed unnecessary by those who consider how often a certain meagre and unproductive sort of thing called scholarship—of which there have long been established forcing-houses in various parts of this country—has passed itself off for true learning to such a degree as to make the name contemptible in the eyes of all men of masculine understanding and sound sense. The classical scholar, or man of learning, according to this vulgar type, is a nice and minute, or it may

be even an elegant and graceful formalist, who has occupied himself so exclusively with the details of Greek and Latin grammar, and small verbal criticism, that he has neither time, inclination, nor capacity remaining for any studies of a more fruitful and ennobling character. Like the miser who counts his guineas, this creature counts his words; like a fancy workman he spends his petty strength in polishing and arranging his tools, while the world is calling for hard work, and the tangible results of well-directed labour. It was one of the saddest fruits of that narrow system of unmitigated scholastic control which so long prevailed in England, that certain favourite branches of learning—Greek and Roman philology, for instance—were exclusively cultivated by a set of persons living altogether apart from the great literary, scientific, and social movements which gave a dignity to the science, and a distinct character to the intellectual life of the age in which they lived. The kind of learning necessarily fostered by these men was in a great measure of the meagre, arid, and unproductive quality described. Neither stimulated by speculation nor enriched by science, not ventilated by the free atmosphere of intellectual life, and not braced by public discussion, the English “classical scholar,” though always spoken of with respect, was too often a creature of the most confined notions, and of the most dwarfish attainments,—a person who could not appear in society without making sensible people suspect that the scholarship, of which so much talk is made, on the banks of the Cam and the Isis, is one of those grand shams with which Thomas Carlyle declares that the present age, above all recent ages, and the English country, above all European countries, is so outrageously befooled. Now, it is my most earnest desire that no reader of these pages should for a moment imagine that in calling upon the Municipal authorities of Edinburgh to take

an important step in the elevation of learning in Scotland, I have the slightest wish to see a crop of prim classical verbalists raised up by artificial pedagogic manuring in Edinburgh, as they have been, and, I fear, still are too much in famous academical cities far south. My cry is raised for learning in the widest and most comprehensive sense of the word; not for Greek and Latin learning only, but for Icelandic also, and Sanscrit; for the history of the beautiful forms of art, and of great social revolutions, as well as of Greek particles and Latin pronouns. What Scotland wants, and what Scotland, I feel assured, will at no distant period produce, is not new editions of trite Greek plays already edited so often, and tortured so critically, that many a luckless word in them has been put into more antic attitudes, and made to perform more graceless movements, than the whole work contains ideas worth remembering; but we demand a scholarship with a large human soul, and a pregnant social significance, which shall not seek with a studious feebleness to avoid, but rather with a generous vigour to find contact with all the great intellectual and moral movements of the age. Such a scholarship is the natural growth of academic institutions, wherever the breath of a healthy public opinion is free to enter the seclusion of the professor's chamber and lecturing-room, where there is a free action of each branch of science upon every other, a free career to every sort of talent, a free distribution of liberal rewards, and, above all, where there is no exclusive influence of self-electing scholastic corporations, and no jealous control of ecclesiastical persons sympathizing with learning only in so far as it subserves the purposes of the Church, and is willing slavishly to assume the type stamped upon it by a dominant hierarchy.

The ground being thus cleared, I may start at once with the sad but true statement, that LEARNING IS AT PRESENT AT

AN EXTREMELY LOW EBB IN SCOTLAND; so remarkably low indeed, and from causes, the operation of which is so obvious, that you, the Patrons of the Metropolitan University, are imperatively called upon to take serious counsel on the matter, and lend a helping hand to any competent person who comes forward and lays before you a detailed and feasible scheme for its advancement. Of course I do not ask you to take this statement merely on my authority—though you may readily conceive that a person in my position can have no possible motive in making a public proclamation of this kind, except for the single cause that it is true; neither, on the other hand, do I mean on the present occasion to make such a detailed exposition of this matter in all its departments, as would satisfy the demands of a person disposed to quibble; but I will mention a few broad facts belonging to the existing intellectual life of Scotland, of such sweeping completeness, and startling significance, that they render all more detailed statements superfluous.

That Scotland was once a more learned country than it is now, is, I believe, perfectly true; though certainly not in any degree to the extent that certain praisers of days gone by suppose. The name of Buchanan in the sixteenth century is a name which enjoys a wide European reputation even at the present hour; not less extensive or less permanent has been the reputation of Principal Robertson, our greatest Academical name in the eighteenth century. But I demur to the assertion which some persons make, that because there were in Scotland about 200, or 150, or 100 years ago, more educated persons who could read, write, and speak Latin with facility, there was therefore more true learning in the country than there is at the present day. The ready use of the Latin language displayed by the educated men of those times, was merely an accident of the age, and can of itself

form no criterion for the real learning of the persons who possessed this accomplishment. For learning, as we have seen, does not consist in a mere familiarity with a certain routine of Greek or Roman writers, much less in the elegant trick of turning a Ciceronian period, or an Ovidian stanza, but in an extensive and accurate knowledge of the most important facts connected with the history of man, a knowledge organized at every step by a sound philosophy, and elevated by pure religion and by a lofty moral purpose, without which all knowledge is vanity. By this standard let the learning of our forefathers in previous centuries be tried; and the more of them that can stand the test so much the better for Scotland, and for my present purpose also. For I feel myself constrained by a sacred regard to truth, to make the broad assertion, that Scotland at the present moment is, in no sense of the word, a learned country; specially, that in our Universities learning is at the lowest possible ebb, and is, in many branches, systematically discouraged, while in others it is altogether ignored; and if at any past period of our history we were entitled to take rank with the most learned nations of Europe, it is only so much the more sad that we stand in that rank confessedly no longer now. We have notable names in science,—Brewster, Lyell, Miller, Forbes, Fleming, Wilson; we have notable names in literature; Wilson, Lockhart, Walter Scott, though recently departed, are still with us, and sustain the literary character of Scotland in Europe, while Thomas Carlyle yet breathes; but in the rich fields of learning, strictly so called, our names are only sufficient to show what we might achieve, if circumstances were as favourable as they are adverse, and if patronage were as warm as it is cold. It is a very notable fact also, and very significant of the low state of learning in our Universities, which ought to be its grand citadels, that the few men that

have done something to support our national reputation for scholarship and research, are not Academical men at all, but either private gentlemen indulging their own erudite humour, or gentlemen connected with the profession of the law, who could scarcely have avoided making a certain display of historic and antiquarian research, though of a purely local type, even supposing there were no Universities in the country. The names of Colonel Mure of Caldwell, Dr. Adams of Banchory Ternan, Dr. Daniel Wilson, now in Canada, George Finlay, Esq., residing in Athens, Thomas Thomson, lately deceased, James Reddie, George Brodie, and John Hill Burton, will suffice to show on what basis of notorious fact the above statement is made. These are names to be proud of; names, some of them known not in Scotland only and in England, but as far as European science sends its voice; but if you inquire at Berlin on the banks of the Spree, or at Munich on the banks of the Isar, or at Bonn on the Rhine, for any famous names of Scottish Professors who have taken a distinguished part in the advancement of those branches of academical learning which form the just pride and boast of Continental Universities, I am afraid you will receive for answer, either no voice at all, or a voice of very small and thin commendation—the damnation of faint praise. The fact is, that our reputation for learning has so completely sunk, that even an occasional exceptive great name, such as that of Sir William Hamilton, I did not find, in a recent tour in Germany from which I am just returned, to be so generally known among that very learned people, as I had expected. No person in Germany ever thinks of looking to a Scottish University for any work of profound learning or original research. In every department where erudition must supply the materials on which philosophy is to speculate, our academical reputation is altogether null. And yet

there are persons in this remote corner of Europe, and I have spoken with not a few such, who live in such blissful ignorance, or narrow self-satisfaction, that they are, one and all, pleased that this should be even as it is, and will talk in large terms of the erudition of Scotch Professors! Conceit is ever the darling child of ignorance; and perhaps it is well that it should be so; for the ignorant, if it might be revealed to them, could not tolerate the sight of their own stupidity, wherefore Heaven sends them a gracious delusion—

“Ach! wie beseligt uns Menschen ein glücklicher Wahn!”

Perhaps some one will say, I am here dealing in general assertions and exaggerated statements. Would to God any one might stand up and correct me of error in that I have spoken! But I know too well what I am talking of; and have been forced by too painful a constraint to trumpet abroad my country's academical nakedness, because I am well aware, that by the eternal laws of God, which no man can disregard with impunity, a free confession of past shortcomings is the only way to make a single step towards future improvement. Proceeding on this principle, I have at no time, since I had the honour to serve as an Office-Bearer in a Scottish University, made any attempt to conceal or to varnish over with fair phrases the radical defects of these institutions, which, as I shall presently show, have been one great cause of the low state of learning to which we are at present reduced. I have, on the contrary, plainly and publicly proclaimed our academical defects, with a view to rouse the sense of national indignation in the better educated and more influential members of society,—and I repeat that proclamation now, careless of the offence that some persons may take, who have a stomach for everything but truth. If certain persons are offended, so much the better: it is a sign that the knife cuts. No great

good was ever done, or attempted to be done, in the world, without offending men—and there are always plenty such to be found—of small capacity, enormous conceit, and infinite aversion to move. But let us exhibit the matter in a tabular form, and bring the potent shapes that rule the imagination as much as may be under the domination of the fingers. The branches of learning, strictly so called, cultivated in the best European Universities at present, may be catalogued under the following heads:—

1. Civil History.
2. Church History, and the History of Theological Opinion.
3. The History of Philosophy.
4. The History of Science, and the special History of the Sciences.
5. The History of the Fine Arts.
6. The History of Poetry and of General Literature.
7. The special History of Latin, Greek, German, Sanscrit, Arabic, Icelandic, and other noted literatures, ancient and modern.
8. The History of Language; Philology, special and comparative; Ethnography.
9. The Exposition and Interpretation of Ancient Documents; Palæography; Criticism; Philology in the narrower sense.
10. The History of Ancient Monuments; Archæology; Numismatics; Greek Vases.

Now, I ask any honest man who has any superficial knowledge of the standard works which have appeared in Europe during the last fifty years, on the different branches of learning here enumerated—how many of these works have been the production of Scotsmen? As an honest workman in some of these departments, I know, that not only has Scotland, with its five Universities, produced no standard work, but it

has produced no work of any kind, not even in the shape of that common shift of uninspired English scholarship,—a translation from the German. In the whole compass of my library, variously equipped with works on Hellenic literature and philology, I can only name five on which I place any value written by Scotsmen—the History of Greek Literature, by Colonel Mure of Caldwell; the Translation of Hippocrates, by Dr. Adam of Banchory-Ternan; the volumes on Byzantine History, by Dr. George Finlay; a Treatise on Romaic and Modern Greek, by James Clyde; and a Treatise on Irregular Greek Verbs, by the Rev. William Veitch; and none of these men are professors. In other extensive and most important departments of learning we have either no name at all, or none that has weight enough to cross the Channel. In Civil History we have Alison, Burton, and Brodie; these men also are advocates and not professors; the historical department of our Scottish Universities is either a blank or a farce. But Berlin has Ranke, and every petty German *academia* can tell her men of profound historical research by the dozen. In Church History we have,—I need say, nothing; for, I suppose, everybody reads Neander, and Neander is a German. In Theology, or the history of dogma, who asks for a book by a Scottish D.D.? Germany, Neological Germany, must instruct us here also, because we have no learning at home.*

* When in Halle in the month of June last, I made the acquaintance of a young English student of theology, who was prosecuting with great zeal the study of Oriental languages under the guidance of Roediger and Hupfeld. He informed me that he had gone through the curriculum of Arts at Glasgow; and when I asked him why he did not prosecute his theological studies there, but preferred studying in Neological Germany, he replied, *that there was no atmosphere of philological learning in the Scottish Universities which could help a man to grow above the dimensions of a merely puerile stature; and he aspired at manhood!* I told him that he was quite right; for that there was an infection in the atmosphere of our Universities in certain departments, which tainted even superior minds with mediocrity. And, in fact, I always advise my best students to go to some German University for at least one Session, (which may

In the History of Science, what names have we? In the department of Law where is our Savigny?—where are the men that have even read Savigny, or would care to pay for a translation of his works? In the medical department of our University, justly celebrated as that is, who knows or expounds Hippocrates?—who cares for Greek? The list of our advertised lectures comprehends every division and subdivision of medical science as at present understood, from the minute histologic wonders of Dr. Bennett, to the reconstruction of the gigantic framework of pre-Adamitic mammoths and mastodons by the anatomic skill of Professor Goodsir; but who gives us a course of lectures on the history and revolutions of medical opinion? I have not such a knowledge of the state of medical learning in this country, as to enable me to speak with much confidence on this point; but I know that the highest honours which the Medical Faculty in Edinburgh can confer, may be obtained without any knowledge of Greek;* and I know also, that the works of Hippocrates were

be done very cheaply,) that they may know what scholarship is; for, that we in Scotland, in such matters, have altogether lost repute, and, endeavouring to compensate for the lack of solid attainments by vain conceit, have acquired the evil habit of “measuring ourselves by ourselves, and comparing ourselves with ourselves, which is not wise.” So nature avenges herself upon those who transgress her laws. Orthodox Scotland will give no encouragement to those highest branches of learning, which are the right arm of theology, and must send her sons to heterodox Germany for instruction. God is not mocked in this, or in any other matter, however certain persons may hug their delusions.

* The objections made to the study of Greek as a qualification for a medical degree by some professional gentlemen, before the Royal Commission in 1827, were of a purely *professional* nature, and, from a larger point of view, destitute of all value. It is no doubt true, that GREEK is not indispensable to a medical man, or necessary for a thorough knowledge of his profession, as it certainly is to a theologian; it may also be admitted that a knowledge of GERMAN may be more *useful* to a young medical gentleman, desirous of making a parade of his acquaintance with all the most recent phenomena of modern Continental medicine. But the question as to whether Greek should be demanded of medical students claiming the highest honours of their profession, does not depend upon any merely professional consideration, but upon this other and much broader question, *How far the highest honours of any profession should*

translated and commented on, not by an Edinburgh professor, but by a poor country surgeon, in the far north. Here also, I suspect, not from any fault in the able and efficient gentlemen who hold the chairs, but from a radical vice in our academical system, our Universities have failed to perform their distinctive work; and what they should have done in a grand style systematically, is either not done at all, or done by extra-academical men partially, and in an accidental way. You perceive, gentlemen, that I have alluded, in the most hasty way possible, only to a very few of the special branches of learning properly so called, tabulated above. I could go on for an hour exhibiting the "beggarly account of empty boxes" with which the remaining shelves are furnished. But I forbear. If, in some of the most popular and most generally interesting departments of learning, our Universities

be granted to any persons who are able to produce proofs of merely professional and technical qualification? The Churches of Scotland, with a wisdom that, under more favourable circumstances, might have produced notable results, have decided that they should not: our medical men think otherwise, or a worthless system thinks for them. It admits, however, of proof beyond all gainsaying, that an exclusively professional training is not the way to produce the greatest and most vigorous professional intellects; rather that such a training has a direct tendency to render less and less marked the difference that ought to separate a LIBERAL PROFESSION from a mere TRADE, and is the fertile mother of all sorts of narrow-mindedness, prejudice, and vain conceit. A large and comprehensive medical philosophy will never be bred in the brains of men who have been educated from their youth upwards in the atmosphere of the laboratory and the dissecting-room; and instead of cramming their overlaid brains with the thousand and one obsolete recipes in Pereira, our young physicians would be much better employed, even in a professional point of view, (not to mention that they have souls,) if they were to spend an hour or two every day in reading Plato and the New Testament. For that the Greek language contains a greater amount of materials for a large human culture, intellectual and moral, than any other language, ancient or modern, is a proposition that will be at once admitted by all whose education has been such as to enable them to form a judgment on such a subject. And, accordingly, it will be found, that wherever Greek learning is neglected, as in Scotland, all other sorts of learning cease to flourish. When the highways of intellectual commerce are untrodden, it is not to be expected that the byways should be crowded.

present almost a complete blank—what are we to expect from an inspection of the more recondite and profound departments? In Sanscrit, where are we to look for our Bopp?—in Arabic, where is our Freytag?—in Greek Palæography, where is our Boeckh?—in the classical department of the Fine Arts, where is our Welcker, our Gerhard, our Jahn? Verily there is something rotten, radically rotten, in the educational constitution of a country that can answer all these questions, and a hundred of the same kind that might be put, only with a blank.

To get rid of the uneasy sensation, and the shock to our national self-esteem, caused by the honest presentation of these facts, I can easily imagine that some stout champion of things as they are in old Scotland, will come blurt out with the old question—*Well, if we are not a learned nation, what harm?* *If the Germans write mountains of erudite books, may we not ask, CUI BONO?* Is not sense better than learning; and can a man not see what is worth seeing in the world, without the spectacles of books? Now, lest any person should be moved by vain talk of this kind, which is not altogether without wisdom, though somewhat of a worldly kind, I hope I have sufficiently taken care, by the introductory remarks made above, to avoid leaving on any person the impression that I set much value on mere learning. A man may attain wisdom and virtue without books and Universities—God be praised! Still learning performs an important part in the intellectual culture of any educated people; and it may be difficult to name a single point in which the civilized life differs more radically from the savage than in the possession and in the use of books. It is easy to laugh at the remote and unpractical character of the subjects on which many German professors write books; men of a strongly practical turn will always have their joke at the

expense of those who indulge in curious, recondite, and apparently useless research ; but books are as much the natural expression of a highly-trained intellect in this age, as ballads were in the age of Homer ;—" By their fruits ye shall know them ;"—and it remains a fact that every educated man who pens a paragraph for a newspaper, and every possessor of a pulpit who sends forth a pastoral address to his people, makes use of some part of the grand floating capital of knowledge with reference to the past, which is only the results of learned research put into a popular shape. Without learning, therefore, as an educated people, we cannot live ; the only question is, whether we shall be content to take this learning at second-hand from the German and other learned nations, or whether it would not be more creditable, more safe, and in the long run, perhaps, a shorter plan, to create that learning for ourselves at home, by Universities properly organized, and by professors supplied with proper opportunities and endowments, (as only very few of them certainly are at present,) to make the advancement of a first-class academical learning the great object and the sole ambition of their lives.

The course of these observations leads me now to inquire into the causes which have led to the decay of learning, and the consequent degradation of the Scottish Universities just proved. Of these there may be others that I either know not, or care not to mention here ; but there are three great causes which stand out with such a speaking prominence, that to state them distinctly will at once explain the sad shortcomings of the past, and point out the way by which alone a decided amelioration can be achieved for the future.

Learning has not flourished in Scotland—

I. Because there is no organization of learned schools, such as exists in other countries expressly with the view of preparing young men for profiting by an academical career.

II. Because, in order to supply this flagrant defect, the Faculty of Arts in the Universities has been dragged down to the level of school-teaching ; and the Professors have been forced systematically to denude themselves of all their highest professorial and academical functions.

III. Because there are few situations in Scotland, and particularly few in the schools and Universities, which a young man of enterprise and ambition can look to for anything like an adequate reward for the toils and difficulties of a life spent in the pursuit of studies not directly calculated to supply any utilitarian demand.

A very few words will be sufficient to show, both that these causes are now working potently in preventing the rise of a learned class in Scotland, and that so long as they continue to work, Scotland can never hope to emerge from that limbo of obscurity and puerility in which the greater part of her academical existence is now consumed.

By the law of nature and the constitution of the human creature, the fully developed young man, having finally thrown off the boy, passes a period of from four to five or six years of bodily and mental preparation for the arduous duties of perfect manhood. This period, in our northern climate, may be placed between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five ; and this is the period which, in a well-organized system of education, brings the boy out of the circumscribed routine of school drill, into the large freedom of academical studentship. Nothing can be more marked than the difference that nature has established between these two periods ; and any system of public education which openly disregards or confounds them, must be considered as existing in direct contravention of the declared will of God, (for every ascertained law of nature is an express declaration of the Divine will,) and must pay a heavy penalty accordingly. Now it is a notorious fact, that

the system of higher education which exists in Scotland altogether ignores this Divine law ; and that in the plainest and most gross fashion, by having no system of learned schools which carries on the education of the boy till such a period as he is by nature calculated for receiving advantage from academical instruction. Unripe boys of sixteen, fifteen, fourteen, thirteen, and even twelve years, are hastily drafted into the highest seminaries meant for the education of fully developed young men on the verge of a ripe and vigorous manhood ; and the consequences of this are quite obvious, and as unavoidable as any corollary from a proposition in Euclid, *first*, that the poor lads are ill educated, from receiving that instruction under the more loose and irregular control of a University, which ought to have been imparted to persons of such unripe age under the strict discipline of a school ; *second*, that the professors are diverted from their proper work, and made to waste their strength in doing the lowest duties of elementary schoolmasters ; *third*, that the whole character of academical learning in the country is lowered down to the level of a school, the national Universities are prostituted to a purpose for which they were never intended, a general hollowness and shallowness in all matters of higher learning takes possession of even the best-educated intellects in the country ; even men of a high type of mind become divested of all aspirations beyond what are dictated by the vulgar necessities of the profession and the office ; and the whole land, whose highest education is based on such a flagrant infringement of the plain laws of nature, sinks gradually in the scale of intellectual culture, and ceases to assert a leading position in the advancement of all those most essentially human of the sciences which are based on the history of the past, and of which the firm foundations can be laid only by academical learning and research.

Of the enormous evils to which this wretched system, or rather want of system, has given birth, it is unnecessary to speak at any length to the citizens of Edinburgh, who have already shewn a noble example to the whole of Scotland, in the elevation of one learned school, and the erection of another, so as fully to answer the highest demands that may justly be made on a *Gymnasium*, or learned school. The High School of this city and the Edinburgh Academy provide full means for the education of our most choice young men from the age of nine or ten years, to eighteen or nineteen, when, according to the laws of nature, they are calculated to receive benefit from a course of strictly academical instruction. But the erection of these two learned schools in the metropolis, though affording the surest ground of confidence for the hope of a better order of things, has yet gone but a very small way towards reclaiming the Universities from that state of puerility into which they had been degraded. The inveterate bad habits of a whole people are not changed in a day : as even a Prussian minister of public instruction might find, if he were allowed for a year or two to try the effect of his potent ordinances and orthodox regulations in this land of local and corporate liberties, and vested mal-organizations. So we find in practice that, while the two Edinburgh academies offer the highest inducements to well-conditioned young men to remain at school, till that period when ripening nature imperatively calls for a transition to a higher style of training, nevertheless a great proportion of those who attend these institutions, is allowed to swarm off to College at the unripe age of fifteen or sixteen, when they are totally unfit for the sudden relaxation of the bonds of discipline which they experience, and are altogether unable to profit by that sort of instruction which it is the business

of a professor, as distinguished from a schoolmaster, to impart. Some of them, no doubt, by what appears to me, with all deference, to be a system of unhealthy forcing, may be crammed to the mouth with Thucydidean and Sophoclean Greek, even at that early age; but they are not therefore ripe for *professorial* academical teaching, as distinguished from school training even in Greek: what we Professors want at the Universities, is ripe heads, not over-crammed brains and over-burdened memories. Nothing can be more pernicious to the development of a healthy and happy soul, than the educational anticipation of any stage in the tender growth of the young thinker; but this is exactly what the Scottish system of sending unripe boys to College is constantly enticing, and even forcing Professors to do. These things are done in Edinburgh. In the provinces, of course, matters of this kind are necessarily a great deal worse. For not only are the Burgh schools in those remote quarters less under the influence of an elevating learned opinion, but the masters are more scurvily paid,* and the Professors (where there is a University) are less under the eye of those who might expect them to attempt a flight sometimes above the recognised level of elementary inculcation. So in Aberdeen, where I taught Latin for eleven years, I found that as little Greek as possible was taught in the school; and the boys sent at the earliest possible age to the University, in order that they might be driven through the more dignified march of a University curriculum before the age of eighteen or nineteen; whereby was secured the

* I have just received a letter from the Rector of the Burgh School, Stirling, a scholar of profound attainments, both in ancient and modern literature, from which I learn that his salary is £60 a year, and his whole emoluments £150!!!—and he does the whole classical work of the place. This is a specimen of the method in which Scotland rewards her most laborious students, and most enterprising scholars.

double benefit (as it was no doubt deemed) to the boys of an *academical education*, with an A.M. attached to their names for the period of their natural lives, and to the learned Professor of a greater number of guineas in his pocket, to console him in some small degree for his many benevolent acts of *a-be-ce-darian* condescension! Yet more; Scotland not only did not, like Germany and England, and other countries, where the upper schools are well organized, take any care to elevate her Burgh schools into the proper dimensions of a learned school, or gymnasium; but she actually committed, and still commits daily, the outrageous educational solecism, of allowing any raw ploughman's son, or blinking watch-maker's apprentice, who conceits himself to have an "inward call" to the Church, to march direct from the lowest and most ill-taught parish school in the country, freely, and without question, into the Latin and Greek classes of the first University of the land! and to do this was, and is, by not a few stiff and stout orthodox Doctors of this country, still esteemed one of the greatest national privileges of a Scotsman, and one of the strongest pillars (*credite!*) also of the Presbyterian Church! When I told these things to sensible men and simple women in Germany, where I resided four months this summer, they held up their hands in amazement, relaxed their sober faces into a half incredulous grin and "made great eyes," good people, as well they might. They whose social life is regulated in the most exact way by systematic gradations of intellectual merit, proceeding to a great extent on the basis of scholastic and academic examinations, could scarcely comprehend the possibility of the existence, in the domain of public education, of such a crude, ungardened growth of English anarchy and mal-organization!

Here, therefore, Respected Patrons, the root of the evil lies

before you, so plain, I think, that a man with blind eyes might feel it. In our academical and ecclesiastical architecture—so far as the state of learning in the Church necessarily depends on the state of learning in the Universities, “We are weak throughout,” as Dr. Chalmers said, “because weak radically.”* I will not hesitate to say, therefore, that what we require for the cure of the enfeebling hereditary disease under which our Universities labour, is a RADICAL reform;—a radical reform, however, that, unlike many others which bear the name, may be achieved without pulling down a single chamber, or a single stone in the edifice of our existing intellectual life. What we require is not demolition, but enlargement and addition—a little salutary law and organizing control, where at present there is only confusion and anarchy—a little strengthening of the substructure where it is weak—a little kindly decoration of our halls of learning, where they are now cold and bald—a little elevation of pediments, and towers, and cloud-cleaving pinnacles, where they are flat. In plain words, the whole country must do for itself what Edinburgh has already done in the matter of the High School and the Edinburgh Academy. The existing Burgh schools must be elevated into learned schools or gymnasias of the proper dimensions; and no person must be allowed to enter any class in the University for any professional purpose, (individual amateur students, of course, may enter free,) without bringing with them a certificate from some duly authorized Examination-Board that he is duly qualified to commence a course of academical study. This is the regular practice, as I have ascertained by careful inquiry on the spot, in Prussia, and in all parts of Germany, even in Bavaria, which, being a Popish country and under Austrian influence, is considered by Germans to have its gymnasias not so highly

* See the admirable discourse on Endowments.

pitched as those in Prussia.* And this brings me to say a single word more, specially on the point of ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, concerning which I am sorry to see that some slight difference of opinion has manifested itself among your body. When I had the honour of being introduced to the Greek Chair of this University, I took occasion, in my *Inaugural Discourse*, to thank the then Lord Provost and Magistrates for the promptness and the decision with which they had introduced a change of system into the conduct of the Greek classes, by which the teaching of the elements of Greek grammar was banished from the academical curriculum. After three years' experience of the working of that act, I repeat that expression of my warmest thanks, and, if possible, with a stronger emphasis; and I may take this opportunity of publicly declaring,—because some people have an itch for detraction,—that I have always administered the act as a faithful and honest servant, and with a conscientious desire to carry out the intentions of those whom the law of the land has publicly declared to be my masters. And this I have done, to my great sorrow, without any decided sympathy or support from my colleagues in the University,—men whose talents I admire, and to whose opinions on most points of academical discipline I am accustomed to look up with that deference which their position and their experience demand. But in reference to the point of Entrance Examination, though I listened with very great attention to an able paper drawn up by Professor Robertson, and expressing the opinions of the majority of the Faculty, I must confess I have never heard any argument calculated to shake, in the

* This certificate is called in Prussia by a very significant name, *Zeugniss der Reife*, or certificate of maturity; and in Bavaria, an *absolutorium*. I have brought with me copies of the formula used in both countries, which I will be happy to shew to any person interested in doing away with the lawlessness of our present educational discipline in this matter.

very slightest degree, my conviction of the wisdom which dictated the regulation of the Town Council by which that examination was established. If the Scottish Universities, in the Faculty of Arts, have become a byword among the nations, for the puerility of their proceedings, and the looseness of their organism, I really see no course of conduct open to you, as Patrons of our highest educational institutions, than to put a stop, by a decided barrier, to that large irruption of unripe boys and crude clowns into the University, by which the evil was occasioned. This you did with firmness, and, at the same time, with that moderation and caution which the crazy circumstances you had to deal with, and the general absence of all system, demanded. Every friend of the higher education in Scotland applauded; a healthy stimulus was forthwith given to all the better class of schoolmasters throughout the country; the students felt their dignity in coming to college not a little increased; the Professor was mounted at least one step in the direction of his proper business;—and yet you are now called upon, I understand, to rescind your enactment. Who is displeased?—Dr. Murray. Who is Dr. Murray?—A gentleman who studied Greek under the orthodox order of the late Professor Dunbar, and who is very much displeased with the heterodox vagaries of Professor Blackie. I am sorry for it; but I am not accountable to Dr. Murray alone. Is there any other person dissatisfied?—Yes. Some country clergyman of the Established Church, located in some remote parish in Kirkcudbright, or uttermost Wigton, who has written to Dr. Murray that he has two sons, utterly ignorant of Greek, aged between twelve and thirteen years, whom he is determined to send to College this winter, and to Glasgow College necessarily, where there is no Entrance Examination, unless Dr. Murray can prevail on the Town Council

to rescind this ordinance with regard to Entrance Examination. Well, this looks business-like; we see the most serious objection face to face. Let us consider it. Two boys from Kirkcudbright are, in a professorial estimate, six guineas; let us add two from Argyleshire, and two from Caithness, that is eighteen guineas, and let us suppose that this is the whole amount of boys deterred from joining the University of Edinburgh by the distant fear of the late barrier act of the Town Council. Let us suppose, further, that at the Entrance Examination six boys—as was the case last year—are actually rejected, that is other eighteen guineas, in all, six-and-thirty guineas of fees lost to the Professor of Greek. Now, I readily admit this is an evil, but it is a very small one. Thirty-six guineas of fees are not to be spoken lightly of by a Scotch professor, passing rich with a salary of fifty pounds a year; but if this pecuniary loss is to me a matter of no moment, when compared with the impulse given to the cause of learning generally, in the case of all those students who stand the Examination, no other person should complain. It is the duty of the public to pay professors handsomely, but it is no part of a professor's duty to make money, or, by degrading science, to multiply fees. If there is any apparent hardship to the rejected young men in being refused academical fellowship at Edinburgh, it is a hardship, as we have seen, lightly set aside; let them go to Glasgow or Old Aberdeen, where, also, I understand, the door stands wide open to all comers. What real benefit either to Church or State is to accrue from these learned Corporations in the extreme West and North, encouraging Scotland in its evil habit of peopling her halls of learning with a congregation of soft milky boys, and unkempt lumbering clowns, I cannot comprehend. I cannot help thinking that it would be more consistent with the dignity of the Universities, and more conducive to the true interest

of the Church, to remit all such unqualified intruders peremptorily to the schoolmaster or to the plough.

So much for the confusion that has hitherto been the law in Scotland, between the natural and legitimate functions of School and University. The evil, when distinctly stated, is so glaring, and the remedy so obvious, that I appear to insult your Scottish understandings, when I say even so little as I have said on the perverseness of such a practice. Nevertheless, as custom has a singular power to dull the edge of reason, and to make the most unnatural practices not only tolerated by sensible men, but enjoyed also and cherished; and farther, that in judging this all-important matter you may feel yourselves freed from even the shadow of a fear that you are allowing yourselves to be influenced by what some cold son of negation will doubtless represent as the high-flown conceits of an individual enthusiast; for these two reasons I am not unwilling here to place before you the opinions of two men well experienced in such matters, and which will, no doubt, have their due weight with practical men in your position, and with your responsibilities. The first is—The opinion of the late Lord Jeffrey, on the proper boundaries between School and University Education, delivered before the Royal Commission for visiting the Universities of Scotland, in the month of November 1826.

“The Commissioners are desirous of knowing what you have thought with respect to the Greek Class as taught in this University?”

“Certainly it would be an improvement in the course of education, that the students should carry away more Greek with them when they leave College; and I do not see how that can well be done, without requiring that they should bring some to it. *I do not think it is a fit thing that a very large proportion of the lads matriculated here in a regular University, should be learning the alphabet of a particular language. I do not see that that is a proper*

employment of an academical course, so long as there is a distinction between schools and universities. The mere initiation into the elementary knowledge of a tongue, disconnected from all study of philosophy, antiquities, or criticism, can scarcely be regarded as a part of *those more advanced studies to which Universities are understood to be dedicated.* That is the proper business of preparatory schools; and I have always been of opinion that it ought to be required, in all great towns at least, as a qualification in the teachers of such establishments. I think such a proportion of Greek should be required from students entering a University, as is now required of Latin. Perhaps not absolutely so much, as the language is more difficult; and therefore, even at College, there should be more reading in the Greek class. *But to turn a great room in an ancient University into a mere school, in which children are set to spell their Alphabet, seems quite an abuse of the nature of the Institution.* The disadvantage of the present practice is not so much that it exhibits a great number of young boys employed in a *kind of work unsuitable to the place where it is carried on*, but that unless you prolong the term of Greek study for two or three years, it necessarily ends too soon, and they ultimately leave their Greek teachers just at the part where they ought to have begun. With all due respect to the teachers, it is impossible, in so short a time, and with such numerous classes, to give anything but a smattering to the far greater number. At Glasgow there are 400 in the Greek class: nothing, certainly, can be better taught than that class now is by Mr. Sandford; and nobody was more distinguished for his zeal and talents than his predecessor, Mr. Young; yet I am afraid it must be admitted, that out of these 300 or 400, there are not above 50 who can read the Gospels in Greek, at the end of the course. Some few may be able to read difficult books, and even to write themes and verses in that language; but these are a few ambitious and clever lads, who have probably been helped at home, and have made extraordinary progress. A single hour a day, or even two hours, bestowed in teaching the very elements, and in so large a class, is quite inadequate to give a proper knowledge of that matchless language, which ought to be taught in such a place, not merely as the GREEK TONGUE, but as a part of the LITERATURE AND POLITE LEARNING OF GREECE.

"Would it then be advisable, in your opinion, to require an increased knowledge of Greek, before coming to the University?"

"That is the ONLY remedy."

"Has it occurred to you to consider how the difficulties that might arise if that class, where it is the practice to learn the elements of Greek, were put an end to, might be remedied?"

"I do not think the difficulty would be great. In great towns, and indeed I have no doubt in every considerable town, the established schools might be easily provided (with very little additional charge to parents) with the means of teaching as much Greek as is necessary for entering the University. No doubt, one feels that to some classes of students, and to families who are less prosperous in worldly circumstances, this might be a burden. But I suspect the greater part of the pupils, even in the humble ranks of society, who have generally a long career before them, will be found to live within a reasonably short distance of some considerable town, where a school of some magnitude is established; and it would be an encouragement for the increase of such schools, even in the smaller towns, if there was poured into them that degree of patronage which is now absorbed by the first Greek classes in the Universities. It would be an encouragement to persons to apply for the office of teachers. On the whole, my opinion has always been, that longer attendance on this branch of study, in some seminary or other, is indispensably necessary."

The second is—The opinion of Dr. L. Wiese, Educational Privy Councillor to His Majesty the King of Prussia, concerning the low state of Learning in the Scottish Universities.

"Their constitution approaches more nearly to that of the German Universities. They have not the tutorial, but the professorial system, and have nothing of the corporate and religious character, which impresses such a distinctive stamp on the English Universities.* As the charges are extremely moderate, and there is no

* True: Our students want, especially in Edinburgh, that *esprit du corps* which adds such a charm to young academical life both in England and Germany; but they receive the benefit of regular religious services in the University, except in Edinburgh, (which is falsely taken by foreigners as a general type of the Scottish University system,) while they have always been free

such thing as an Entrance Examination, they enjoy a very numerous attendance; and the students are divided into classes, and taught as in schools. On the results of this system, a stranger cannot pass a more severe judgment than what is passed by the Scotch themselves. It is manifest, that the GREAT MAJORITY OF THE STUDENTS COME TO THE UNIVERSITY AT TOO EARLY AN AGE, AND WITHOUT SUFFICIENT PREPARATION. Some of them, indeed, come directly from the parish schools mere boys, whom the Professor of course must treat as boys, [mit Ihnen PUERILIA treiben,] teaching them, for example, the mere elements of the Greek language. Professor Blackie of Aberdeen wishes, as a test for entrants, only the ability to translate an easy passage from Livy, and some chapters of the Gospel into English, and such a knowledge of Latin composition as may suffice for rendering a plain piece of historical English into Latin, without making any gross blunder in the flexion of words, or the structure of sentences; besides, the general principles of Greek and Roman History, and Geography, and the most important rules of Latin prosody; while the student who can translate Xenophon's *Anabasis*, *ad aperturam*, without any great blunder, shall be allowed to enter the class of the second year, passing over the junior one. It must be confessed that these demands are extremely moderate, so that they do not admit of coming into comparison with the testimonial of maturity which our young gymnasiasts must take with them as their passport to the University. If Professor Blackie's proposal were agreed to, the demands made upon a Scotch University man of the first year would not be much higher than what may be expected from a good Tertian in our Gymnasia.*

"I add a confession of a Scotch University teacher, from the *North British Review* of the present year 1851:†—'We grieve to say

from the bigotry engendered by the ecclesiastical exclusiveness of the English system, and the hypocrisy of signing creeds which they had never studied, and which they did not seriously believe.

* The writer does not state here the reason which made my proposal so "extremely moderate," namely, because I saw rising against me at every corner an extremely immoderate and unreasonable opposition, which even now has not ceased to bray. A "tertian," in the language of the German gymnasia, is a boy who wants four years to complete a gymnastical course.

† On this point the writer is mistaken. I have reason to believe that the author of the article here alluded to was Mr. LORIMER, advocate, a gentleman

our inferiority is almost beyond dispute. The standard of scholarship in the highest Philological classes in our Universities, is absolutely inferior to that in the fifth form of any respectable English or German school.' The same writer says, with good reason, 'that this evil condition of things will not be mended before either an Entrance Examination is introduced, as practised by some of the English Colleges, or a Departing Examination, according to the example of the Germans.' But, besides this, the number of upper schools affording an adequate preparation for University studies is too small in Scotland, while the EXISTING UNIVERSITIES, WHICH, IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS, ARE SUBSTANTIALLY NOTHING BETTER THAN SCHOOLS, [*die im grunde nur Schulen sind*], ALLOW TO THE YOUNG MEN A DEGREE OF FREEDOM OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO THEIR GRADE OF SCHOLARLY CULTURE; the lectures, for instance, which mean the actual instruction given, not lasting longer than five months in the year, so that the remaining months of every year are a long vacation, in which the young gentlemen are left altogether to themselves, and to their own private inclinations."

I call upon those who have any sense of shame left in such matters, who have the least feeling for the honour of the intellect of Scotland, to digest these testimonies. The book in which the second is written has excited great attention in Germany, and is now travelling rapidly through a second edition; the man who writes it stands high in the counsels of a monarch, who, whatever faults he may have committed as a politician, has no superior on the thrones of Europe as a cultivated and a kindly gentleman; and, here we are with our academical shame and disgrace flying trumpet-tongued over the most highly educated country of Europe, and standing in large letters stereotyped before the microscopic eyes of the ministry of Education in Berlin; and all this we are to look upon as quite natural and proper, and to sit down quietly and hug the damning imputation, as a

to whom, for his persevering exertions in the cause of improved academical education, the Professors of the Scottish Universities, amid so much lamentable apathy, are under the deepest obligations.

mother hugs her rickety child, because, forsooth, it is suited to the genius of the people! Rags are suited to beggars; but when the winter winds blow keen, and the frost is sharp, it is well that some benevolent Christian takes a thought to clothe the outcast.

I will now make a few observations on the third point stated in page 21, as a potent cause in preventing the rise of a learned class in Scotland. There is no adequate encouragement given to learning in this country, compared with what is given alike in rich England and in poor Germany; we look upon the learned man and the great teacher as an inferior sort of creature, and we do not remunerate his services to the State in the same ratio as we do those of a public auditor, who adjusts an account of expenses in a law-suit, or of a judge who hangs a thief; and by this procedure, we systematically draw back all the best intellects of the country from the prosecution of studies, where honours are few or none, rewards scanty, and in many cases starvation only is sure. This is exactly what PLATO says in that passage of the *Politics* which I have printed on the back of the title-page: "*Those arts and sciences in a State are cultivated which are esteemed, while those which are in no estimation are neglected.*" Human nature is always the same; scholars are not a money-loving nor a money-making generation; but they cannot live without money, and they cannot live well without as much money as lawyers and haberdashers and tailors require to live well; nor has the public a right to expect first-class men of learning to adorn their seminaries for a small fee, any more than that for a vulgar penny a London *prima donna* can be brought to grace your provincial opera, or a famous *danseuse* to make a *divertimento* for your play. There is a class of persons in this country, I am ashamed to say, who have a very low estimate of the value of a teacher's services, and who grudge

nothing more than the scanty fees which in Scotland are paid for the maintenance of men of learning. These persons have the habits of mere journeymen and tradesmen, whose only estimate of labour is by the hour or piece. If a professor in a University gets £60 a year from the public purse for lecturing an hour a day, on Greek or Hebrew, is it not ample remuneration, or rather more than enough for the expenditure of so small an amount of breath? Calculate the value of any of Rubens' grand pictures in this way, and I don't think it will reach very far above the money product that appertains to a good work by a common sign-painter. Teachers are not to be paid well merely because they are for the most part hard workers, but in order that you may attract as much talent as possible into the teaching market. Men with mercantile souls, who boast of their practical tendencies, surely ought to understand this. But when we talk of giving good salaries to public teachers, these mercantile men will whip their one dogma out of their pocket, and proclaim with an air of triumph the great modern gospel of FREE TRADE, telling you that Sanscrit, like shoe-making, ought to be self-supporting! If it ought to be so, why has it never been so? It has never been so, in my opinion, just because it ought not to be so, and because in the nature of things it cannot be so. All men in Scotland demand shoes, but no man demands Sanscrit. The economical principle which applies to scholarship, is the very reverse of that which applies to shoe-making, and other occupations regulated by the vulgar operation of supply and demand. Scholarship must be artificially supported for the same reason that certain plants must be bred in hot-houses, or reared in hot-beds, just because they do not grow in the open heath, and are not so common as cabbage. Learning must be supported in a great measure by the public; and it requires the more sup-

port always, the more it rises in quality, and becomes really worthy of the name. This is a matter which, as Patrons of the University of Edinburgh, demands your special attention. If I could conceive it to be your object to make the University pay as a mercantile concern, then the lower you keep down the standard of learning in our halls, and the wider you throw our doors open to all sorts of unqualified creatures calling themselves students, so much the better. You will always find a greater number of persons willing to take advantage of a low course of lectures, than those who either desire, or are capable of being benefited by the highest. And thus you, as Patrons, and we the Professors, in so far as we are paid on the mercantile principle of fees, have a direct pecuniary interest in maintaining our Scottish Universities in their present low estate of humiliation and shame. It may be perfectly true that a very eminent teacher, like the late Professor Forbes, lecturing on a popular and even fashionable subject, will command a more frequent attendance, and gather in a more miraculous draught of fees than a less eminent man; but it by no means follows, as a general rule, that the more profound the attainments of a Scottish professor, and the more worthily he handles his high theme, whatever it be, the more numerous will be his audience. On the contrary, in the present evil condition of our educational system, it is quite certain that a Professor must step down from his proper platform, in order to make himself useful to his students; and the more he elevates the matter of his teaching to its proper academical stature, the more useless does his teaching become, and the fewer will be the fees that he receives. You have already seen that the very small measure of elevation in the teaching of Greek which the Entrance Examination produced, has had the effect of mulcting me in some twenty, thirty, or forty pounds annually;

and if in addition to this, the Greek classes be elevated, as I feel a strong and confident assurance they must be, to their proper academical pitch, in which case a great proportion of young men, who now people the second and third Greek classes of the University, will finish their classical education at the schools; it is plain that the pecuniary consequence of this great educational improvement, must be to make the classical chairs of the Universities less and less self-supporting, and to cut off some hundreds a year from the emoluments of the Professors. For it cannot be too distinctly stated, what has to my knowledge been very seldom proclaimed as a naked truth, that the PROFESSORS of the Faculty of Arts in the SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES, ARE SUPPORTED IN A GREAT MEASURE BY POACHING ON THE SCHOOLS, AND ARE ONLY SAVED FROM STARVATION BY MAKING A COMPACT WITH DISGRACE.

But are the salaries of the professors and higher teachers really so very small, and their emoluments so altogether inadequate? For myself, I make no complaint; money was never an object with me; though, I must say, I cannot understand why my services should not be as handsomely acknowledged by the public for whom I sweat, as those of the Sheriff of the County; but this I do say, waiving all personal respects, that (with the exception of a few chairs in Glasgow, and one or two in Old Aberdeen*) the emoluments of our Scottish professors, and Rectors of our Burgh Schools, are a disgrace to an educated community. Generally, also, those chairs which, in the nature of things, are the least self-supporting, are the worst salaried. The Professor of Hebrew,

* I do not say, however, that even in these cases our first-rate men of learning are paid so well as our second-rate men of the law. That they manage these matters otherwise in Germany, I have brought with me from the Continent a great mass of documents to prove; the contents of which I may publish if necessary, on a future occasion.

for instance, though receiving small fees from a poorer and less numerous class of students, has generally a less salary than the Professor of Greek, who, as I said, has hitherto made a fair living by poaching on the schools. The whole emoluments of the Professor of Hebrew (and Oriental languages!) in this city, salary, fees, and all, do not exceed £250 annually!!! How can Oriental learning, the right hand of theology, prosper in a country where gentlemen, devoting themselves through long years to these difficult and remote studies, are treated by an indifferent Government and an apathetic people in this way? How can the higher literature of Christianity flourish in a land where I have known the Divinity Chair going about the country begging for a D.D. with a rich wife, who could afford to take it? But I will not trouble you with ransacking the blue books; the fact is notorious; neither our professors, nor our schoolmasters, nor our clergy, are paid as they ought to be by a religious people, if, indeed, the religion of this part of Christendom includes generosity and justice, which I sometimes feel inclined to doubt. Let any man living in Edinburgh, or in any country town, compare the incomes and the consequent social position of gentlemen in the profession of the law, with those of clergymen and first-class teachers, and he will understand what I complain of, and how I never can be brought to view with approbation a public morality which, while it professes to honour religion and learning, is contented to witness, without moving a finger, the social humiliation of those who profess them. It is not, and cannot be, a matter of indifference to the cause of learning in any country, that those who profess it are by pecuniary pressure prevented from maintaining their position in society at that level to which they naturally belong. Many a teacher of talent and fine culture in this country, has been driven to pass his life in an obscure corner,

not from any morbid feelings or pedantic awkwardness, but from pure pecuniary inability to respond to the occasional festive demands which society makes upon its members ; and this excellent and talented person, when he does on a rare occasion emerge into the light of the social world, is despised as "a Dominie." What made him a Dominie ? The niggardliness of the community.

But it is not only that the existing teachers and professors of learning are ill paid, but that they are too few, and too little various in their character to foster the growth of a large and influential learned class in the community. Your Greek and your Latin, your Logic and Mathematics, your Natural Philosophy and your Moral Philosophy, (and even Rhetoric, once perhaps by accident !) are all very well in their way, and to be respected as old foundations and long-trodden highways ever must be. But even supposing these branches of science and learning were taught in a style as high and masterly as they are now low and elementary, they do not embrace the whole circle of the arts and sciences ; and there are many potent influences moving the deep heart of the world at the present hour, of which not a breath is felt in any of the lecturing halls of the very reputable men, who beat the pulpit drum academical according to the routine of your established curriculum. This is not as it should be. The Universities are not mere drilling shops for the routine studies of a few scholastic men, (however the English heads of houses may have perversely studied to make them so ;) but they form a grand assembly of the choice spirits of the nation, so far as the national wit is occupied with researches not bearing directly on practical life : and in this assembly there ought to be no art or science, however remote from secular use, (in fact, the more remote the more academical,) which does not find in the Universities its representative and

its champion. For these arts and sciences not being directly demanded by the necessities and utilities of daily life, will, if their Professors find no asylum in academical institutions, necessarily be neglected ; and this is literally what has taken place in Scotland ; many most important branches of learning, represented by two, three, or half-a-dozen Professors in a well-conditioned German University, being altogether neglected and almost unknown in Scotland, simply because there is no field for their Professors. I will never believe that Scotsmen have not got as good heads as Germans. I know they are capable of any kind of intellectual work, however hard and even repulsive ; but so long as I see plainly that the Universities beyond the Rhine are well furnished with all sorts of first-rate lecturers on every subject that can possibly interest the human mind, while in Scotland we are contented with a bill of academic fare scarcely more extensive in many departments than what satisfied the small demands of the Popish monks four hundred years ago, I shall not fret my brain much to hunt out the cause why the highest sort of learning marches in the one country, while it lags or lies palsied in the other.

I will mention here by way of illustration a case within the range of my own personal acquaintance, which exhibits a pretty fair sample of what men of high learning may look for, who have the misfortune to be born in Scotland. This was the case of a profound archæologist, not a mere antiquary, but a man endowed by nature with a fine poetical gift, by the exercise of which he could combine into a grand organism the scattered relics of ancient life, and cause them to glow with a new vitality. This man, after devoting the prime years of his youth to illustrate the local antiquities of his native town, produced a noble systematic work on general Archæology, which immediately commanded the admiration,

and secured the approval of all the most famous Archæological Societies of Europe. He spent many years in Edinburgh; he walked our streets year after year, and was familiarly known and esteemed by all the best-educated men of this "Modern Athens;" he loved Edinburgh dearly, but he could not afford to starve. After having piled up in all these laborious monuments of learning—monuments, in my opinion, quite extraordinary for a comparatively young man—he was compelled to seek a meagre livelihood by performing pieces of the lowest fag-work for a cheap bookseller, at such rate of remuneration as tradesmen think sufficient for the liberty to squeeze the brains of men of genius for the nourishment of their own stomachs. He waited year after year with a high-hearted and hilarious endurance, which I often admired, in hope that something might "turn up" for him, as the phrase goes; but nothing did turn up for him. Had he been a lawyer, something in all likelihood would have emerged; for these gentlemen, though not at all top-heavy with learning, sometimes, God knows, from their frequent opportunities of making themselves useful to the leaders of political parties, have always contrived to have at their disposal a number of snug places, where they are often paid very well, for doing very little.* Had he been in Breslau, or utmost Königsberg, I am equally certain that the enlightened and discerning Majesty of Prussia would have found him out, and constituted a special Chair for his benefit, if there was none vacant. But being a Scotsman, and there being no Professorship of Archæology in the University of the Modern Athens, he ex-

* I have heard it said that the reason why law-officers are paid better than professors, is because they do more work. A well-employed barrister certainly does a great deal of work; but the generality of our sheriffs do not do so much work as our professors. In fact, there is no more hard-working creature in the world than a *real* scholar; and if there be any *sham* scholars in the Universities, there are a great many more sham lawyers in the Parliament House.

patriated himself, and is now in America. Thus we banish our best men; and the case is not singular. I have known another such. Like the ducal proprietors in the Highlands, we see our unfeathered bipeds emigrate with indifference, because our humour delights only in the conservation of the plumed!

So much for the lack of encouragement to high learning in this country, and on the urgent necessity of opening to our young men of enterprise and ambition, a larger arena of intellectual gladiatorship in the Universities. Here also, before proceeding to what yet remains of my subject, I may set before you shortly that large amount of public sympathy and authority, under protection of which I have made the strong statements in the immediately preceding pages. You have no doubt heard, and through the medium of the public prints seen the Prospectus of an Association of gentlemen recently formed for the *EXTENSION OF THE SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES*. Among the members of this Association, I observe the names of the Right Honourable Thomas Babington Macaulay, Sir David Brewster, John Inglis, Esq., Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, Leonard Horner, Esq., John Hunter, Esq., Craigcrook, Auditor of the Court of Session, John Thomson Gordon, Esq., Sheriff of Mid-Lothian, Professor Fleming, New College, and other persons well known in the city of Edinburgh, for their warm sympathy with every scheme that tends to the intellectual and moral advancement of the Scottish people. Now, in the Prospectus circulated by this Association, I find the following passage:—

"That in Scotland, while the public wealth has greatly increased since the date of the establishment of its Universities, no corresponding addition has been made to their Endowments; but on the contrary, these are, in many instances, relatively much less than at a former period.

"That, sooner or later, evil consequences to society, of a very serious nature, must result from the neglect of our Universities. The permanent interests even of popular education can be secured only by attending to those of the higher instruction, upon which general civilisation (of which popular education is a consequence) is dependent, not only for its progress but for its stability."

And this other—

"That there are important Branches of Study which have attracted the public attention through Courses of Popular Lectures, and otherwise, but for which no provision has yet been made in the Universities of Scotland; and there are other subjects of the highest importance, which, from their nature, can neither be popular nor remunerative, and for the prosecution of which there is not sufficient encouragement afforded by any of the learned professions or otherwise in Scotland.

"For these among other reasons, the Endowment of additional Chairs in the Scottish Universities is imperatively called for."

And again—

"The following are the subjects which the Association would in the meantime suggest as possessing such importance to the community as to merit that they should be properly represented in the Universities of Scotland:—

1. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW and HISTORY.
2. POLITICAL ECONOMY.
3. INTERNATIONAL LAW and DIPLOMACY.
4. ENGLISH LANGUAGE and LITERATURE.
5. HISTORY of PHILOSOPHY, Ancient and Modern.
6. METAPHYSICS, apart from Logic and Ethics.
7. MODERN CONTINENTAL LITERATURE.—*Teutonic*.
8. MODERN CONTINENTAL LITERATURE.—*Romanic*.
9. COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY and the SCIENCE of RACES.
10. HISTORY of ART."

In these three sentences you have a distinct proof that the statements just made by me, with a warmth which you will readily excuse in a person holding my position, and feeling as I do strongly on all that affects the reputation of our Universities, are guaranteed by that most respectable company

of cool men of business, and clear-headed lawyers, whose names stand prominent in the Committee of the Association. I now proceed to my special proposition with regard to the conduct of the Greek classes.*

The important and extensive department of academical learning which you have committed to my care, comprehends the following divisions:—

1. The History of Greek Literature.
2. The Political History of Greece.
3. The History of Greek Speculative Philosophy.
4. Greek Ethical and Political Philosophy.
5. The History of Science among the Greeks.
6. The History of the Fine Arts among the Greeks, and the Explanation of the Monuments of Ancient Art; Archæology; Numismatics.
7. The Anatomy and History of the Greek Language, and cognate languages; Grammar; Philology, strictly so called; Comparative Philology; Ethnography.
8. The History of the Records of Ancient Life and Literature; Interpretation of Inscriptions; Palæography.
9. The Critical Interpretation of Ancient Greek writings; Hermeneutical Philology; Criticism; the Constitution of Texts.

You will easily see, that to do anything like justice to this immense scheme, not one Professor of Greek in a University, but two or three, or half a dozen, are required. In fact, it seldom or never happens that men are to be found so richly endowed by nature, and so favoured by circumstances, as to excel in all these departments. The consequence is, that, as in the natural sciences, so here also the labour must be divided; and accordingly there is no University in Germany

* For a more full statement of my views on the general question of SCOTISH UNIVERSITY REFORM, I may be allowed to refer to the Article by me, bearing that title, of the *North British Review*, No. xlv., for May last.

which does not exhibit some half dozen, or a whole dozen, of labourers, giving instructions in the various branches of Hellenic literature here enumerated. Take for example the scheme of lectures in Greek literature and art, to be delivered during the present winter session in the University of Berlin, which now lies before me.

- (1.) The Speeches in THUCYDIDES explained. By Dr. BEKKER.
- (2.) Greek Antiquities, and Greek Political Science, and the Oration of Demosthenes for the Crown. By Professor BOECKH.
- (3.) The Comparative Grammar of the Greek, Latin, and German Language. By Professor BOPP.
- (4.) The Theogony of Hesiod and the History and Archæology of Greek Art. By Professor GERHARD.
- (5.) The Principles of Archæological Criticism, and the method of proving the genuineness of Works of Ancient Art. By Professor TOELKEN.
- (6.) The First Book of Aristotle's Rhetoric Explained. By Professor TRENDLENBURG.
- (7.) Greek Political History, and the Electra of Sophocles. By Professor CURTIUS.
- (8.) The Orestiad of Æschylus. By Professor GEPPERT.
- (9.) The Monuments of Greek Art in the Royal Museum Explained. By Professor PANOFKA. And Lectures on Greek and Roman Mythology. By the same.
- (10.) Exercises in Greek, Latin, and Sanscrit. By Professor BENARY.
- (11.) The Monuments of Ancient Art in the Acropolis of Athens explained. By Dr. BETTICHER.
- (12.) The History of the Greek Language, with Exercises in Speaking Ancient and Modern Greek. By Dr. MULLACH.

To do all this work in Edinburgh, you have only a single Professor of Greek—or, more correctly speaking, to do no part of this work at all—but to teach the elementary command of the Greek language, as it is acquired at a German school. In fact, the Scottish people, taken overhead, have no idea of a Professor of Greek other than that of an upper

schoolmaster, who is paid a certain number of guineas for teaching their sons a certain quantity of rudimentary Greek, as a marketable article in country Presbyteries, and an article which has a reputable sound even in quarters where it has no mercantile value. Now, if these ideas be prevalent in the country—and I appeal to your own feelings whether they be not literally so—we have a clear and a sufficient explanation of the fact so strongly stated in the first part of this paper, that our Greek Professors, however eminent in point of talent and superior in intellectual culture, are nevertheless, for the most part, without a name in the world of European scholars. No person expects a common mason or a hodman to start as a great architect, and pile domes in the air like the mighty Florentine who built St. Peter's. As little are you entitled to expect that the man whom your vicious system compels to waste the whole, or the better part, of his intellectual strength in teaching unripe boys to spell Greek, shall ever be able to achieve anything in the wide domain of Greek learning, that will entitle him to take his place as a full brother beside the Herrmans, the Boeckhs, and the Lobecks of the Continent. And the fact is, accordingly, we have no Lobeck or Boeckh to name. We never dream of such a thing. Your Professor Sandford was a very accomplished and a very eloquent man no doubt, and he caused many strains of most sweet classical music to tinkle pleasantly through the ear-chambers of many delighted young men in the smoky west; but his name is not known among the philologists of Europe; and none of these most hopeful young men, who learned Greek under his high stimulus, have been known to the world, as the Boeckhs or the Lobecks of the scholarship of young Scotland. And it must always be so. Many hopeful young men will continue to learn Greek; but no hopeful young man will ever become a learned adult,

so long as the present vicious and utterly perverse system continues. As Lord Jeffrey says, Greek is one of those things that can only be learned by the careful drill of a school; it never has been taught, and it never can be taught, under the more loose discipline of a University.* Besides, even supposing we could succeed in turning our Universities altogether into *good* schools, and our Professors altogether into expert teachers, the matter will be nothing mended, but rather worse. For we can do so only by altogether annihilating all properly academical teaching in one of the most important departments of the Faculty of Arts. In fact, we have got ourselves into a war with nature, by attempting to achieve with one organ what according to her laws can only be achieved by two. The consequence has been something similar to what we saw in the Crimea last campaign, when we sat long months before Sebastopol with fruitful loss and barren expectation; we could not shake the strength of that redoubtable fortress, because we had too few men for the work, and these few were ill organized.

You see now, I hope, where I am pointing. If you wish Greek to be well taught in your metropolitan University—and I am well assured it is your highest ambition that it should be so taught—you must at once break with the wretched system of hereditary bungling and barren pretence which has brought our scholarship into its present disrepute; you must divide the work, and get it done thoroughly, the professor's work by a professor, and the schoolmaster's work by a schoolmaster.† You must follow in the University the same plan,

* "All the vigour and vigilance that can possibly be put forth from the Academic Chair, never will replace the incessant task-work, the close and daily examinations of the school-room."—DR. CHALMERS.

† "I think a broad line of demarcation ought to be drawn between the work of a schoolmaster and the work of a professor. But, in point of fact, the professors of the learned languages, during the last hundred years, have

that, as men of business, you adopt in your shops and in your counting-houses. You must not imagine that business will be better done when every merchant is his own clerk, and every barrister his own attorney. You must recognise the fact, that to ask a man of learning and accomplishment to drill crude boys in the merest elements of school-learning, and, at the same time, to produce such works of scholarship as shall maintain the reputation of the University of which you are the Patrons, is to ask an impossibility. If any person says that my predecessors did, with ease and credit, what is here represented as beyond the bounds of possibility, I say they did not. Either they were good teachers and bad philologists; or they had a certain local (certainly not European) reputation as philologists, being bad teachers; or they were both bad teachers and bad philologists, which, according to the present system, is the most natural result. In fact, in such numerous classes as are placed under the superintendence of one man in the University of Edinburgh, some two, three, or, as it was in the golden days of Professor Dunbar, even four hundred young men, in every different grade of preparation, being huddled under one academic captainship, good teaching becomes impossible,* and the following three

become more of schoolmasters than they were originally."—DR. CHALMERS, *before the Royal Commission in 1827.*

* The smaller number of students under one professor, combined with a more strict system of discipline and more frequent examinations, is the grand reason, I believe, why the Aberdeen students, in other respects much less favourably circumstanced, are often found to beat the Edinburgh students at public competitions. The general competition for bursaries before entering on the University course, prescribed in both the Colleges of the north, does, in fact, act as a most efficient *Entrance Examination for two-thirds of the students.* At these competitions Latin composition was long the only, and is still the principal test of merit. Hence the decided superiority of Aberdeen boys in that exercise (wherever they are publicly tried) and their thorough knowledge of the principles of grammar. This is a matter, that, in the present day of scholastic competitions in high places, the friends of the University of Edinburgh are bound to take into very serious consideration.

results unavoidable. *First*, The great mass of the unprepared, the ill-prepared, and the half-prepared boys are neglected: the elements are not thoroughly taught. *Second*, The few ripe, well-prepared, and ambitious boys are kept back and discouraged; their expectations of what College teaching should be, as distinguished from mere schooling, are disappointed; at best they must go home, stimulated by a slight sprinkling, rather than strengthened by a thorough infusion of proper academical doctrine. *Third*, The professor, in trying conscientiously to do everything, does nothing well. He is not a good elementary teacher, because the academical arrangements are not so favourable for that sort of work as the arrangements of a school; he is not a good professor, in the strict sense of that word, because his attention is distracted, his talents diverted, and his strength wasted on subjects not at all professorial, and that can bear no proper academical fruit.

You see therefore what must be done. You cannot cause good Gymnasias in all the provincial towns of Scotland to grow up in a day; neither can you enforce, in the meantime, an Entrance Examination that will satisfy the high Prussian ideas of Privy Councillor Wiese, or the distinguished Rector of your High School; but you can do a thing, that, so far as Edinburgh is concerned, will, by a single stroke, obviate the evil consequences that have hitherto flowed to Scotland from the confusion of the separate provinces of College and School. I teach three Greek classes, containing about two hundred and thirty, or two hundred and forty students. Of these, the first or most elementary class, generally ranking from eighty to one hundred students, is taught two hours a day. The second class, composed of young men more advanced both in years and attainments, but still decidedly beneath a properly academical standard, is taught one hour a day. These two

classes are called public classes, that is, classes which the Professor is bound to teach by the public customs and regulations of the University. The third class, which contains a small number of students, and of these only about a half who pay fees, (a class, therefore, which, in a pecuniary point of view, the Professor has small interest to maintain,) is a mere private enterprise of the Professor, to supplement the deficiencies of the authorized system. It is, nevertheless, the only class in which I find it possible to attempt anything like high academical teaching, as distinguished from mere schooling, and this only in a very imperfect way, as at least two-thirds of the few who attend this class (there being no attempt in Edinburgh at anything like classification among the students) are either ill prepared by previous grammatical training, or unripe in point of years. Now, what I have to propose is this, that instead of asking me to waste two hours daily in doing the purely elementary work of that lowest class, you would appoint a tutor or assistant professor (which title perhaps is less exceptionable) to do that work; and thus set my hands free to do the properly academical work of the two higher classes, and of any other class that I may see it good to institute for the purpose of the highest and most select philologic instruction. The reasonableness of this proceeding requires not a word of exposition, if you have followed the course of the general argument above given. As a practical man, an honest teacher, and at the same time a person ambitious to do something for the literary character of my country, and for the honour of your University, I declare to you, that the present system is not workable to the satisfaction of any scholar who knows what he is about. I cannot do justice in the way of elementary drill to the ill-prepared boys in the lowest class, and at the same time satisfy the just claims of the riper young men, who are well trained

in the Edinburgh Academy, and in the High School, under the superintendence of so eminent a philologist as Dr. Schmitz. I demand to be made free from an embarrassment of incompatibilities. I claim to have more time for the learned studies that belong to my professorial teaching, and to be less distracted by a sort of work, which, while it materially retards me in the prosecution of those studies to which, in obedience to your call, I have dedicated my life, is utterly insufficient for the attainment of those objects which it professes to have in view.

But how is this assistant professor to be *paid*?—This is a Scotch question, and as a Scotsman I will answer it. How are your sheriffs and your sheriff-substitutes paid, your policemen, your scavengers, and your lamplighters? Is there to be a pound for every stalking subaltern of legal pomp, and shall men make words about a penny for the hard-working schoolmaster? But, indeed, the thing was half done already, and might be altogether done to-morrow, if there were only a manly will and a high purpose in the proper quarter. The thing was half done, I say, when the Senatus for two years granted a salary of £100 to the young man who, during that period, under the designation of University Tutor, acted as my assistant. Let the Senatus make this grant of £100 again, and upon the top of this sum let another £100 be clapped, by those who pay the policemen, the scavengers, and the lamplighters; and the thing is done. For £200 a year you will certainly get the services of a most efficient young man, and all the better, let me say, for being young,* who will command the respect of the students, and the con-

* There is an objection sometimes made to Candidates for University Chairs, that they are too young. This objection is founded on a vulgar error. There is no profession which more than that of a teacher requires a certain amount of juvenile vigour and enthusiasm. A man of twenty-five is for this reason generally a more hopeful professor than a man of fifty-five.

fidence of the public. Observe, I do not say that £200 a year is enough to give such a person, if you wish to do the thing in a gentlemanly way,—for it never has been the custom in this country to treat teachers like gentlemen,—I am only stating on niggardly Scottish principles, for how little the thing can be done. Now, £200 a year with six months' leisure, and the title of professor, (which I would by no means withhold,) is, to a young scholar, as scholars hitherto have been treated in Scotland, a very great matter; and you may depend upon it, if you hold out such a prize, you will have an ample selection of scholars with the very highest qualifications. Situations of this kind, connected with the University, substantially the same as the English fellowships, are, indeed, under whatever name, as has been often observed, one of the great desiderata of our Universities. At present we treat our students, when they leave our learned halls, with the honourable title of Master of Arts, in the most shabby way possible. Clad with academic pomp, as with the purple mantle of a king, forth they go into the busy world of money-makers and men who believe only in the gospel of free trade; and no doubt the poor lads are free to trade on what they please; but finding solid learning an article for which there is not a whisper of a demand in Scottish Church or State, or in any of the learned professions of Scotland, falsely so called, they forthwith make market of their purple mantle, that they may buy a mess of pottage, and clothe themselves with a Jewish gabardine, and learn to make money by all means, and in due season pay reputable worship to Hudson's statue, like other idolaters. Now, it is not desirable that our most enterprising young scholars should be forced to go out into the wide world in this way, and cast their learning aside when it is in the act of ripening, and go to increase the ranks,

already too great, of those who believe in material gods, and worship only at utilitarian shrines. We are too practical a people by much, in this country, believe me; there are some things in the world that the ellwand or the penny cannot measure, and learning is one of them. Therefore, let us see to it, that we provide some opportunity of learned leisure and thoughtful study to our selectest youth, that they may not be driven prematurely into the selfish rivalry of the market-place, the frothy whirlpools of popular literature, and the mud-tempests of political partisanship.

One word more, and I have done. The new principle recently introduced into some departments of our public life, according to which not the selfish respects of personal favour and nepotism, but the impartial test of intellectual attainments, is to determine public patronage, and pave the way for lucrative appointments—this new principle, borrowed from Prussia, (*fas est et ab hoste doceri*),* has already com-

* I may here take the opportunity of stating, as there are some people always on the watch for unreasonable objections to every reasonable proposal—that though I have in this paper more than once alluded to the undoubted superiority of Germany in the whole domain of the higher education, I can in no wise allow myself to be represented as an unqualified admirer of the gymnasial and academic system now existing in that country. I have lived much amongst the German people, and enjoyed the benefit of much discourse with experienced German teachers,—but this very intimate intercourse has put me into the condition to see the faults of these institutions, as clearly as any intense one-eyed Oxonian bigot might desire. But their faults are matters which it chiefly concerns them to have mended; their virtues lie open to us for our imitation. It is a very paltry thing to say, as I have sometimes heard it said, that because the Prussian people follow a bad system of politics in the present crisis of European equilibrium, therefore the Prussian schools are of no use, and we can learn nothing good from them. The political character of a people is not formed by their schools; but contrariwise, their schools are influenced by their political system. The good schooling of Prussia has no more to do with the present perverse alliance of that country with the Czar, than our bad schooling has to do with the glorious victories of Alma and Inkermann. It admits of proof, however, though I have no time here to go into that proof, that wherever a system of bureaucratic despotism exists, as in Germany, the evils of that

menced to play a part in our educational world, to which you, as Patrons of the Metropolitan University of Scotland, can not remain indifferent. You are aware of the immense advantages which students from the English Universities must possess in all public competitions, arising partly from the fact of their more thorough and long-continued training in certain important departments of learning and science; partly, also, from the fact that the examiners, upon whom the fate of the competitors depends, are chiefly men conversant only with English methods, and who, by the very questions which they put, as well as by their way of putting them, unintentionally give a decided advantage to English candidates. Now, against these difficulties, arising from the very nature of the case, and for which no man is to be blamed, we Scotsmen have only one legitimate weapon which we can use—and that is the reform of our present upper schools and Universities, after the manner which I have pointed out. Specially with regard to Greek, which is the corner-stone of all the higher learning, only if you classify the students and divide the labour, as I have shown, can you at once achieve the double object of giving a thorough grammatical drill to the youngest students, and a high philological culture to the most advanced. Have the courage to follow my advice—or rather the plain dictates of common sense, which should require no man's advocacy—and you will by one decided stroke satisfy both the most remote country clergyman, in giving a more solid foundation to the learned studies of his sons, and the most ambitious Edinburgh citizen, who will no longer be forced to seek in

system, though they cannot be altogether prevented, are most materially modified, by a good system of schools and Universities; and in the same way it is certain, that the evils of a contrary nature, to which democratic states are subject, admit of amelioration only by an improved system of religious, moral, and intellectual training.

Oxford that higher growth of polite learning, which your
wise enactments shall have enabled to show flower in
Scotland.

I have the honour to be,
GENTLEMEN,
With all respect,
Your faithful servant,
JOHN S. BLACKIE.

43, CASTLE STREET, EDINBURGH,
November 1, 1855.

EDINBURGH: T. CONSTABLE, PRINTER TO HER MAJESTY.

