

UNIVERSITY IDEALS.

[Continued from page 202.]

little direct bearing on his future life work, but that other things occupy an even larger place in the organization and in their effect on the mental development of the average student. Social life and recreation, which in France are wholly extraneous to the university, and which in Germany form but a subordinate part of university interests, are in England the dominant features.

The collegiate life of England gives every opportunity for a man to see men of his own kind. The conditions and traditions of admission afford every opportunity for the development of *esprit de corps*. The habits of athletic development which the English students have previously enjoyed enable them to make their work on the river and the field a means not only of recreation nor of mere physical training, but of mental and moral training also. No one looks to Oxford or Cambridge as a place of professional study. All men look to them as places that have trained generations of English gentlemen, and as places where the development of the gentleman by means outside of the lecture room and the examination hall far more than by means inside is the ideal and the dominant purpose.

EARLIER AMERICAN COLLEGE LIFE.

The American college of two generations ago was not conceived in accordance with any one of these three types just described. Perhaps it more nearly corresponded to the universities of Scotland than to any of those already named and described. It resembled the English type more than the French or German, because it laid so much stress on the association of a body of students collected within the limits of a narrow group of buildings, and living a life in which the whole student body developed itself by mutual instruction apart from the town which surrounded it. It also resembled the English university in the non-professional character of its studies. The American college was, however, radically unlike the English university in the stress which was laid on a fixed curriculum, and in the rigid insistence on the full performance of class-room work as a condition of membership.

A MIXED ORGANIZATION.

As time went on, some things tended to increase the resemblance—notably the growing importance of athletics in American student life—but other things had at least equal effect in diminishing this resemblance. The growing tendency to locate professional schools in the same place with colleges superadded a system of technical education more like the French system in the character of its instruction; and later still the men who hold a leading place in the organization of our large universities have had before their mind German models rather than French or English. They have not treated the university as a central examining board for separate colleges, as is done in England, nor have they sympathized with the development of separate schools of essentially technical instruction, as in France; but they have attempted to give the student in his later years a freedom of choice of subject and a training in principle rather than in practical details, which is the essential feature of German work.

This effect has been most conspicuously seen in those comparatively new universities where graduate instruction in non-professional studies has been predominant from the outset; but it is a tendency which has affected in greater or less degree every group of

American schools of instruction that has been large enough to call itself a university. With a mixed organization of this kind,—English colleges, French professional schools, and German ideals which have modified the work both of colleges and of professional schools,—it is hardly a matter of wonder that no two men are wholly agreed as to what a university is. At one extreme we have those who see in the ideal university a place where, in the words of Ezra Cornell, "any person may find instruction in any study;" at the other extreme we have those who regard a university as a place where a man may meet fellow men of his own sort; who make this acquaintance and the *esprit de corps* that attends it the matter of dominant value, and who see in the class-room instruction only one among many means of training of which no individual as an individual may avail himself, and which it requires a body of men of like pursuits and ambitions to utilize. Between these two extreme conceptions of the university as a means of individual instruction for individuals on the one hand, with only incidental grouping of men and a means of grouping of men on the other hand, with the instruction only incidental, we have a world-wide range of choice.

The exact type which we shall finally choose no one can as yet tell. We have neither given definiteness to our conception on the proper organization of a university nor to our ideal of the purposes which American university life should fulfil. Perhaps no single type will ever wholly dominate the others; perhaps no one of the competing ideals of higher education will ever wholly supersede the others in the public judgment. But there are one or two principles regarding university methods which may be laid down as certain, even though they are not as yet universally recognized, and one or two others which may be urged with a high degree of confidence, even though they are as yet the subject of controversy among experts.

WHAT THE IDEAL UNIVERSITY IS NOT.

In the first place, the ideal university is not an agency for teaching the student the particular facts which are going to be of service to him.

In the reaction against the old college curriculum, over-weighted as it was with Latin, Greek and metaphysics, there has been in many quarters a demand for more practical studies, that should have more connection with the after life work of the student. In many respects this demand was a legitimate one. But the reasons alleged in support of it in certain quarters were radically wrong. It was said that the college should teach a student things which he needed to know in after life,—things which, if he did not learn them in the college, he would have to acquire laboriously in his first years in the shop or the office. Plausible as this view sounds, it is wholly fallacious. To begin with, it is impossible to know just what facts any student is likely to want. The conditions of the day shift so thoroughly that what has been learned in college as a fact in one year may have to be laboriously unlearned in practical life during the next.

[Continued on page 204.]

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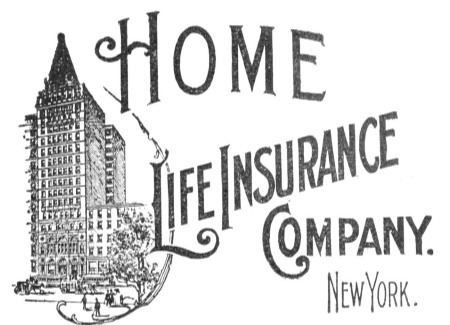
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