

PRESIDENT ELIOT'S REPORT.

Three Years for the B. A.—The Admission Requirements.

The report of President Eliot of Harvard for the year 1898-99 has just been issued, and is, like all its predecessors, most interesting and suggestive.

The changes in the requirements for admission to Harvard College are set forth in considerable detail, and the range of election is summarized by the President in describing the candidate for admission, as follows:

"Nearly three-quarters of his preparation may be just such as it was one hundred years or fifty years ago,—namely in Latin, Greek, Elementary Mathematics, and Ancient History; or, on the other hand, these traditional subjects may be represented by less than one-third of his secondary school studies,—namely, by Latin, Algebra and Geometry. Again, nearly half of his preparatory studies may be English and the Modern Languages; or the Natural Sciences, which thirty years ago were not accepted at all for admission to college, may constitute a little more than one-third of his preparatory studies. Further, at the small additional cost of offering three advanced subjects instead of two, the candidate may present himself in Modern Languages and History for sixteen out of the twenty-six points required; whereas thirty years ago the modern languages were not accepted at all, and history was represented only by a fragmentary and fleeting acquaintance with Greek and Roman History, such as a boy might easily acquire in a day or two from any small primer of ancient history.

"All the subjects permitted for admission to Harvard College may also be counted for admission to the Lawrence Scientific School, but the Scientific School will also count towards admission, shopwork and drawing, botany and zoology."

THREE YEARS FOR THE B. A.

President Eliot holds persistently to his belief in the desirability of a three years' course for the B. A. degree, and his report on this line is one of satisfaction, not to say of triumph; for he finds that the three years course is practically an accomplished thing now, through the succession of changes brought about in no case by this idea, but all uniting in this direction. He recalls that in March, 1889, the Faculty of Harvard College sent to the President and Fellows certain modifications of regulations, the most important being the reduction of the number of courses required for the degree of B. A., from eighteen and four-tenths to sixteen. These proposals the Presidents and Fellows accepted, but the Board of Overseers rejected them. "It now appears," says President Eliot, "that the number of courses required for the degree of Bachelor of Arts has been progressively diminished of late years as a result of several votes adopted by the Faculty for various reasons which have no immediate bearing on the policy of giving the degree of B. A. in three years instead of four."

He then notes the abolition of one or two courses, partly because the work has been put back into the preparatory schools, and says: "After the current year, the requirement for the degree of A. B. will be seventeen courses for all students who have been well enough trained in the elements of English to attain grade C or a higher grade in the prescribed English of the Freshman year; and a large majority of all College students will attain grade A, B, or C in the course. For students who anticipate English A the number of courses required for the degree will be either sixteen or sixteen and a half, according to the grade which they obtain at the examination."

"The common attainment of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in three years is certainly approaching. No specific legislation will be needed to accomplish this important change; for any young man of fair abilities can now procure the degree in three years without hurry or overwork, if he wishes to do so, or if his parents wish to have him. That this wish is felt by an increasing number of students and parents is demonstrated."

"The strength of the movement is disguised, as was pointed out in the last report, by the desire which many men feel to be recorded in the Quinquennial Catalogue with most of the friends and contemporaries with whom they entered college; but within a time comparatively short the majority of those who enter the Freshman class will come to College with the purpose of completing the requirement for the degree in three years. A large number of the present Freshman class have already avowed that intention, and made their choice of studies accordingly. The movement will be promoted by the opposition of the Law Faculty to the admission to that School of College Seniors who have not absolutely completed their studies for the A. B. degree. It is of course desirable that the requirements for the A. B. degree should have been fully met before the student enters a graduate department of the University."

RETIRING ALLOWANCES.

The President describes the system of retiring allowances which has finally been adopted at Harvard and calls it "the first careful and comprehensive University system to be put in force in the country."

DINING HALLS.

The opportunities for getting board at reasonable rates at Memorial Hall and the new Randall Hall are taken advantage of, according to the report, by nearly two thousand students. The average price of Memorial Hall is \$4.00 a week. At Randall Hall there is an entrance fee of \$3.00 and then the student takes as many meals as he wants to and pays according to the restaurant system. At the end of the year any surplus is divided and the dividend ordinarily exceeds the entrance fee. President Eliot says that at this hall the frugal student can board for \$2.50 a week. There is also a system of combination meals at 14 cents for breakfast, 14 cents for lunch and 16 cents for dinner, which is reported as much used. It allows the student to board, if he takes them all, at \$3.08 a week.

Those who don't board at these halls pay, according to President Eliot, generally from \$5.00 to \$8.00 a week outside, from which he figures that these two halls save Harvard students at least \$150,000 a year on food.

WAITERS.

In view of the discussion about Commons, what he says concerning waiters is of interest:

"One noticeable difference between Memorial Hall and Randall Hall is that at Randall Hall all the waiters are students. There is an active demand for these places, and the method seems equally satisfactory to those who wait and to those who are waited on. The waiters are selected and directed altogether by the student officers of the Association; they are paid weekly at the rate of 25 cents an hour, and as a rule do not work more than sixteen hours a week. The method is economical, because the number of waiters can be kept proportionate to the resort,—that is, fewer waiters are employed at the less frequented meals, or at the less frequented part of the period of a single meal."

ATHLETICS.

The President thinks that intercollegiate sport is better than it used to be, but not what it ought to be. The incentive for violation of rules in football seems to him unusually strong, and he notes with regret the feeling among "some players and colleges," that they have something to gain from victory in sports which would compensate them for violating the rules or taking unfair advantage. He says that "the squalid banks of seats" on Soldiers' Field deface that property, and regrets that students have to pay large entrance fees to see interesting games; also that the players "think that all their wants as to uniforms and personal services should be liberally supplied from the abundant gate money."

AN INTERESTING ENDOWMENT.

An anonymous giver has contributed \$156,000 for the establishment at Harvard of a professorship of Hygiene for the benefit of the students of the college,

the object being to provide them with a medical friend "competent to give them the best advice, winning in his nature, and devoting himself chiefly to the physical and moral welfare of the undergraduates." The giver of the fund wishes it to accumulate until it is large enough to provide an income capable of attracting to the position a man of high quality. President Eliot considers the gift a most valuable one.

The total amount of gifts to Harvard for the year is \$1,544,829.67. Of this, the sum of \$1,383,400.77 was given to form new funds or increase old ones.

LITERARY LECTURES.

Professor Palmer on the German Lyric.

The fourth lecture in the series on lyric poetry was given Wednesday evening, February 14, by Professor A. H. Palmer, on the subject of *The German Lyric*. A brief summary of the lecture follows:

The lyric poetry of Germany exhibits the greatest possible variety of external form—a variety more abundant and produced with higher average success than has been given us by any other language of modern times. To this result has largely contributed the reproductive and imitative quality which has ever been a prominent attribute of the German spirit and literature. No other language affords such full, free and varied opportunity for self-expression as the German.

No other nation can vie with the Germans in lyric folksong. The artless, spontaneous simplicity of the Volkslied contributes in a large measure distinctive worth and charm to the lyric poetry of Germany and has quickened the inspiration and production of nearly all the great German lyrists, especially of Goethe and of Walther von der Vogelweide.

Walther stands for that first, so called classical period of German literature. He sang of nature, love, politics, and in many of his lines reaches the absolute perfection of such writing, not to be surpassed in simplicity and purity. He excelled in what has been a characteristic feature of the lyric poetry of Germany—the song of patriotism.

Another characteristic lyric type is the religious poem. It was Luther who first began to satisfy the longing of religious fervor for a spiritual folksong in the mother tongue. Not merely did he originate the German church hymn but he brought it at once in some of its forms near to perfection. In the poems of Gerhardt, who stands next to Luther as a creator of sacred song, we find an optimistic and peaceful nature, and many of his lyrics have become folksongs of the religious life.

Goethe is the preëminent German lyric poet. His poems have that pure simplicity, that refreshing clearness, that artless movement, that sweeping spontaneity which mark the Volkslied. His universal nature is in lyric productivity like the creative power of great nature herself. Goethe has for every mood, every shading of feeling, a distinct expression, and endlessly manifold as the feelings of the human heart are the lyric notes and their combination at his disposal. With Goethe every lyric is sung to the vibrations of a definite life—experience or condition; therefore is there in the manifoldness of these poems a variety of shadings and colors of feeling as numberless as are the points and modes of contact of the heart with external life.

As to Heine, there can be no doubt of the greatness of his lyric gift. In form and melodiousness he has all the charm of the Volkslied at its best, but that utter sincerity and genuineness of feeling are too rarely found in his poems.

In comparing the German with the English lyric, it may be said that the characteristic difference between them is that the German lyric is more spontaneous, more simply expressive of emotion, more musical; that if the English lyric excels in finish, the German excels in feeling or, in short, that what we can broadly call the Volkslied quality is the typical characteristic of the German lyric.

PROFESSOR BEERS' LECTURE.

The concluding lecture in the series was given Wednesday, February 21, by Professor Henry A. Beers, entitled *The*

English Lyric. A brief summary of the lecture follows:

It is generally agreed that the formal lyric, as distinguished from poetry which is merely lyrical in spirit, is properly the expression of a single emotion. It is also agreed that it should have a certain brevity—the intenser the emotion the shorter the poem. We can no longer define the lyric as that which is to be sung. Songs are sung, but they are no longer literature. Our truly lyrical period was the Elizabethan age, the age of the song-lyric, when "music and sweet poetry agreed," when everyone fingered the lute as a matter of course, when everyone was expected to carry a part in a song. England had then a national school of music and the work of poets was set to notes by composers known and valued abroad. Sometimes poet and musician were one. Dr. Thomas Campion, who printed four books of airs, was one of the best composers and also one of the sweetest song writers of his day.

A song which means to be sung should voice universal human emotions. It should not be subtle or learned. It should use images and figures of speech sparingly and avoid decoration. During the Civil War the Union soldiers had got hold of a noble marching chorus "John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave, his soul is marching on." Nothing could be better than this, but the chorus was all there was of it. Mrs. Howe's attempt to supply the want with *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* proved in many ways an impressive poem, but it was not singable. The words did not fit the chorus and the spirit of marching men.

Elizabethan England was full of old songs, and Shakspeare has caught their perfect *aura* and reproduced them in all their simple variety. The stage is still in possession of the traditional airs to which some of these were sung in the seventeenth century and possibly in Shakspeare's own theatre. This is the essence of the song lyric, that, when we read it, we want to sing it. There is a lilt in the language that calls for musical rendering or accompaniment. The songs of Burns are actually sung. Nearly all of Scott's simpler ballads suggest a tune. In the Elizabethan lyrics one is struck with the originality and variety of simple stanza poems, but with the monotony of theme. A majority are love songs. The reader is soon surfeited. The charm of these lyrics lies in their freshness, ease and grace, and sudden felicities of phrase.

The Renaissance joy of life and passion for beauty prolongs itself in Robert Herrick, who is now recognized as one of the most exquisite of English lyrists. Herrick apart, the lyrical poetry of the Stuart period, while gaining in art loses something in nature. New strings are added to the lyre, but they had not the sweetness, the first, fine careless rapture of the old. The masters of this school were Jonson and Donne. There is always some classic lurking behind Jonson's verse, and Donne, an original artist in his own strange and subtle way, disdained smoothness.

With the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 begins the second and the greatest period of English lyrical poetry and it is to be observed that not only does our nineteenth century poetry deal with a wider range of emotions and deal with them more intellectually, but the evolution of technique has been carried much further. There is nothing in the comparatively simple Elizabethan measures to compare with such effects as are wrought by language and verse in Coleridge, Scott, Poe, Tennyson and Swinburne. But these things are not sung. At its highest point of technical accomplishment our lyric poetry is least lyrical. Poetry and music have developed their own resources independently to a point where union becomes difficult. The music grows so rich and complex that it overwhelms the words which it ought to interpret. Shelley is the most lyrical of all our poets, yet his verse is seldom set to music. Our modern lyric touches its high water mark, not in the song lyric, but in the lyric of art.

The first meeting of the German Club for the present year was held Friday evening, Feb. 9. Professor John C. Schwab spoke on "Materialistic Element in German Culture." L. C. Kingman, R. I. Dudley and George N. Whittlesey, from 1900, were elected to the club.