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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE EMPIRE.

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In a previous paper under the title of "The University of the Busy," I gave some account of the early history of the Owen's College and the Victoria University, in the City of Manchester. In this paper I intend to do the same for the more ambitious institution in the metropolis of the Empire, which is known by the name of the University of London. This name is in many respects a misnomer. A university is properly a teaching institution, but this university teaches nothing. It has no professors and no classes. It can boast of no academic halls, where under "studious cloisters pale" students discuss either the last achievements in science or the chances of a forthcoming boat race. Its graduates come from every town in England, and even from the colonies. It has a local name, but can hardly be said to belong to the citizens of the metropolis, and scarcely to have a local habitation. It is called the University of London, but it has little more to do with London than it has with Manchester or Birmingham. It is in fact utterly unlike all other universities in the world, and is more aptly designated by the name which I have appended to this paper, and which I have taken from a recent writer in the "Quarterly" than by any other. It is a university which has its centre of operation in the British capital, but which embraces the whole empire, and even the whole world in its activity.

This university rests on no very ancient foundation. Its establishment is coincident with the commencement of the Victorian age. It was half a year old when the girl Queen Victoria ascended the throne 50 years ago. Its charter was granted in the last year of the reign of William IV., and bears date November 28, 1836. Its origination is one of the many things that will make the reign of Victoria memorable in history beyond any other reign in British history. It is now in its jubilee year, and, like these Australian colonies, challenges comparison between its small but ambitious inauguration and its brilliant career of success. When it came into being it had no home. It was a corporation, and nothing more. Some envious critics, who had a general idea that corporations have no souls, thought that this new-born corporation would be no exception to the rule, and greeted its advent with sneers and contempt. It rests on a charter granted "to certain persons eminent in literature and science" to act as a board of examiners,

and to confer degrees in all branches of erudition except one, which was left out in the cold. This excluded study was no other than the "scientia scientiarum, viz., divinity, which it was thought could not be provided for in a national university which had no traditions to maintain and no connection with any established church.

Visitors from the colony to London may perhaps dissent from my statement that this University of London has had no visible architectural embodiment in the metropolis, and may assert that they have themselves seen it, that it stands in Gover-street, and is a very much larger and more imposing structure than the pretty edifice which adorns the North-terrace in Adelaide. It is not always safe, however, to believe even what one sees. The true habitation of the university is in the Burlington Gardens, where, after many changes of residence, it finally settled down. I remember how in my own experience I was directed to Somerset House when I went to London to matriculate, how I had to go further west to the Vernon Gallery when I graduated, and how I passed my final examinations in Burlington House. The building called by the cockney cabmen the "'Varsity" is only a "college," which was commenced at the same time. Its promoters wished, like the founders of Owen's College in Manchester, to secure for its governing and teaching bodies the power to confer degrees, and sought hard to obtain the coveted boon. The opposition of Oxford and Cambridge to the establishment of a new teaching institution which could confer degrees was so strong that a compromise was effected. Two charters were issued simultaneously, the one making the "University College" a corporation, and the other, as I have before stated, conferring the power to give degrees on the aforesaid "certain persons eminent in literature and science." We all know that when once a name has obtained a footing in popular parlance it is very hard to dislodge it. "Bendigo," and "Van Diemen's Land," and "Botany Bay," and "Emerald Hill" are colonial instances of this tendency of names to die hard even after they have been proved to be no more needed or to be erroneous. The Gover-street College has been known to the cabmen as the "Varsity" for 50 years, and probably will be so designated for another 50 years, though as a matter of fact that building never was a university at all.

The first chancellor of the new University was the Earl of Burlington, now the Duke of Devonshire, who held that honorable position till 1856. Its first vice-chancellor was Mr. John Lubbock, the father of the famous scientist (Sir John Lubbock), who represents the University

in Parliament. Among its earliest promoters may be found the name of the great Dr. Arnold, who struggled hard to save the University from excluding Scripture history and literature from the arts course. In spite of the outspoken and even vigorous opposition of the ancient Universities of Oxford and Cambridge to this curious and new-fangled creature of the age, two prelates of the church as well as Dr. Arnold had a place on the first senate. The intention evidently was to steer the newly launched ship between Scylla and Charybdis, and avoid on the one hand identifying the University with the "sectional interests of Nonconformity;" or, on the other, incurring the hostility of the Established Church. It was the aim of those who wrought so hard for this new institution to open the gates of academic distinction to all her Majesty's subjects, and to throw impediments in the way of none who were able to win its honors. This, however, was not fully understood even by its promoters at the first. The University had to pass through the purging fires of experience before it was able to read its own liberal destiny. It was started with the idea that no education is complete which is only gained from books. Good teaching, academic discipline, and the nameless but potent influences which arise from the mutual association of students, were deemed quite as essential to a genuine education as an acquaintance with Latin classics or chemical formulæ. There is a great deal of truth in this opinion, and it is this element in their education which makes Oxford and Cambridge to hold their own in spite of innumerable rivals both in England and on the Continent. The founders of the University of London were mostly men who had been trained under all the charms and advantages of collegiate residence, and they wished to conserve and provide for this gentlemanly element in education while making their new University as liberal as possible. All candidates for degrees under the first charter of 1836 were therefore required to bring certificates of having been students in some one or other of a long list of colleges scattered over England. There was no attempt to keep any genuine college off that list. It embraced the Catholic seminaries at Stonyhurst, Ware, and Bath, the Congregational Colleges at Manchester, Birmingham, and London, the Wesleyan Colleges at Taunton and Sheffield, King's College, Owen's College, University College, and very many others. The list was wide enough, but no one could graduate who was not a member of some one of these associated institutions. It was thought that though none of these institutions could compete

with Oxford or Cambridge, yet they did afford some sort of a guarantee of a student having given himself up to a career of study and of academic discipline, and that he was not a mere receptacle for what the skill of a "grind" or a "coach" could get into his brain to enable him to squeeze through an examination.

It sometimes happens that a man is most vain of that which is the least credit to him. A certain French king had a knack at mending locks, and he seemed to care more for his reputation as a locksmith than as a financier. A writer of a modern novel, which grew out of a certain sensational incident which he had met with about a charming little child being gored to death by a bull, once told me that the only part of the book of which he was ashamed was that same germinant incident. Sometimes what we deem to be the Hamlet in a play turns out to be only a supernumerary. It was so with the University of London. When it was 20 years old it sought and obtained a new charter empowering it to dispense entirely with the condition of residence in an affiliated institution. It was found that there could be "cramming" inside colleges as well as outside, and that good work could be done under private tuition or in the solitude of lonely lodgings as well as within academic halls. Experience had taught a valuable lesson to the senate, and it was prepared to send its cherished and venerated prejudices to the winds. The new charter, which was issued in 1858, set the University free from its former conditions, and enabled it to become what it has now become, the "University of the Empire." It did more than this, for it bestowed upon it the power to send a representative to the Imperial Parliament.

It would be impossible for me to follow the University through all the subsequent changes and developments that have taken place. The abolition of the college residence test led the senate to establish a "system of graduated or intermediate examinations which might furnish evidence of coherent and continuous study, and thus to become an effective substitute for the certificate of attendance at college." From the time when the new and liberal charter of 1858 was granted, the career of the University has been both rapid and honorable. A few figures, which I take from the *Quarterly Review*, will make this plain. Figures are not always interesting, but they become fascinating when we think what they really mean. In 1858 the candidates for matriculation numbered 299. In 1885 the number reached 1,900. In 1858 there were 72 candidates for the B.A. degree;

in 1885 there were 437 for the intermediate examination in arts, and 339 for the final B.A. In medicine there were 43 for M.B. in 1858, and last year there were 228; and for the doctorate in medicine 21, instead of 73. The institution of degrees in science, in 1860, still further added to the number of graduates, 1,377 candidates having since that date presented themselves at the intermediate science examination, of whom 697 have passed. The work of the first 50 years is briefly summed up thus:—In that time 17,200 persons have matriculated, 3,056 have obtained the degree of B.A., 386 that of M.A., an exactly equal number LL.B., 1,072 M.B., and 516 M.D. In the new Faculty of Science 446 reached the degree of B.Sc., and 73 D.Sc. The aggregate number of presentations for the examinations in all departments appears, from the statistics of the University, to have amounted to about 56,000.

If any one will think over those figures, will try to imagine the amount of hard brain work they represent, and will remember that very few of those 56,000 persons would have had anything to do with the higher education at all had there been no such institution as this "University of the Empire" to help them, he will see what an immense influence this upstart academic body in London has had. The matriculation examination has come to be regarded as the goal at which all private and public schools aim—the *terminus ad quem* of all juvenile students; and so all the seminaries, academies, schools, colleges, and Dotheboys Halls in the country have been elevated and improved. The older universities have likewise felt the refreshing influences of wholesome rivalry and liberal ideas, and have followed so good an example, and have even surpassed it in their "local examinations" and other plans of public usefulness. The monopoly which existed when our Queen came to the throne has been utterly broken up. The monopolists at first did not like it, and cried out lustily against the process. After a while it turned out not only that they were more frightened than hurt, but were all the better for the discipline through which they had passed. Fifty years ago the Conservative world was terribly afraid of all Liberalism, identifying it in all cases with socialism, anarchy, chartism, sansculottism, and all other dangerous movements. During these fifty years the world has, however, grown wiser and has ceased to be afraid of the horrible bogey of liberty. In these degenerate days it is not always easy or practicable to tell the difference between a Tory and a Whig, a Conservative and a Liberal. This memorable reign has taught

us all a lesson of mutual toleration and sympathy, and these colonies have had much to do in teaching this memorable lesson.

It is fitting that the reign of a queen should henceforth be looked back upon as the commencement of the movement in favor of the higher education of women, and it is an honor to this "University of the Empire" that it should have taken the initiative in this chivalrous enterprise. The senate advanced upon this delicate reform very gradually. In 1867 it sought from the Crown power to admit female candidates to its examinations. Special subjects were indicated as those which were specially suited to the habits and tastes of the feminine mind, and certificates were granted, but no degrees were conferred. The perversity of the sex is proverbial, and so it proved in this case. The feminine mind was not to be coaxed into a sort of tender erudition. "The distinctions that were obtained by women in these examinations were not in fact gained in subjects which were regarded as especially feminine, but in the difficult classical languages and dry science." The teachers and the candidates alike deprecated any gentle leniency being shown in the examinations, and demanded a right to enter the academic tournament as equal champions with the men. The double spirit of chivalry and justice wrought in the minds of the members of the Senate, and led them to agitate for the removal of all hindrances to the free choice by female candidates of just those subjects which they might deem most helpful to themselves in their own efforts at self-improvement. The charter of 1878 contained the final settlement of this question—"By its provisions every degree, honor, and reward was made accessible to both sexes on perfectly equal terms." This caused a noteworthy flutter in the fashionable schools. A new ideal of an educated lady was created, and like all other ideals this one soon manifested its power. Plato, Tacitus, and the calculus entered into the studies of ambitious young ladies, and the drawing-master and the dancing-master had to take a very second-rate place. The Ladies' College at Cheltenham, Bedford College in London, and the North London Collegiate Schools, were conspicuous for their academic ambition and success. Even the peculiar province of the doctors was invaded. A school of medicine for female students was established in London attached to one of the hospitals, and ladies began to study anatomy and physiology. And what, may be asked, is the practical result of all this? I quote, in reply, a few figures. Between 1879 and 1885 836 women passed the matriculation examination. Of these upwards of

200, that is, about 25 per cent., continued their studies, and attempted to gain a degree. This number includes 175 who passed the first examination for the B.A. degree, and 27 the intermediate examination in science. Of these, 100 subsequently obtained their degree in arts and 74 in science; while 19 candidates passed, several of them with marked distinction, the examination for degrees in medicine. Cambridge followed this good example, and in 1881 opened all its examinations to women, though for the present it withholds the actual degree as the exclusive privilege of men. Under this fostering influence such colleges as Girton and Newnham have arisen, where ambitious young ladies "receive to all intents and purposes a university education and due university recognition."

One other fact I must mention before concluding this sketch. The University of London has the honor of being the first academic body that has placed the English language on its proper footing. The structure and the meaning of our own mother tongue were too much neglected in the days of our grandfathers. It was thought that if a youth was grounded in his Eton grammar he would learn English by instinct, with no other guide than "Lennie" or "Murray." He might, it is true, become a correct and easy manipulator of our plastic language, but he would remain in ignorance of the rich mines of golden treasure that lay neglected under his feet. This intrusive University of London has, however, changed all this, and has made English the fashion. It introduced very early in its career English literature and philology among the conditions of the B.A. degree. Dr. Latham's "English Language" was the text book, and though that work has been superseded, it served its purpose. Like many another good book it was born to die, but in dying to leave a healthy progeny of better books behind. By this step, and by giving degrees in science, this, which even now is among the youthful universities of the world, has influenced both widely and deeply the character of the teaching in all the schools and colleges of the empire. It has accomplished this partly by its common sense and liberal regulations, and partly by maintaining a very high standard for all its degrees. It grants no honors which have not been won on the battle-field. It allows no man to proceed to a high degree simply because he keeps his terms. It gives no bogus distinctions. It has no power to confer honorary degrees, and does not seek such a power. It has even a more limited power than our University, for it can admit none to

be members of its "convocation" who are not its own graduates. Such larger powers may be useful and necessary for our colonial institutions, which are local in their character and which undertake teaching as their primary duty, but they would utterly spoil the character and the prestige of the "University of the Empire."

Many notable influences have been at work to mark out the 50 years of the reign of Victoria as unique in the history of the Empire, but among them must certainly be assigned a very high place for the University of London. It arose because it was needed. It has fallen in with the spirit of the age. It has succeeded because it has reflected the thought of the times. It is itself the creature of this modern nineteenth century, and has done much to make the century what it is.
