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*Oxford after the
War & a Liberal
Education* By *J. A.*

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TO VNU
ANNOUNCING

OXFORD AFTER THE WAR AND A LIBERAL EDUCATION

THERE are two propositions which I wish to make prominent at the outset, for they have ruled the thought which I have given to the subject of this pamphlet :—

1. A long history of constitutional development lay behind Oxford when the War came and made the great difference : reformers, with proposals designed to meet the great difference, must, first of all, realise clearly what was the essential characteristic of the life of Oxford throughout the stages of her development in the past, and, realising that characteristic, must see that their reforms are still, in widely altered circumstances, true expressions of it : they must not allow the great difference to break the natural continuity of the traditional life of Oxford ; rather, they must use the great difference as an opportunity of maintaining that life in fresh vigour and with enhanced value.

2. In the New Age upon which we are now entering, Oxford, if she is true to herself, will

have it in her power to advance to a position of great influence as a centre to which students from the over-sea nations of the British Commonwealth, and, indeed, from the whole English-speaking world, will be more and more attracted.

I submit that it is under the control of these two propositions, taken singly or together, that all Statutes and Regulations for new courses of study to be introduced at Oxford, with their respective examinations and degrees, and for the alteration of existing courses, ought to be framed. Some such Statutes and Regulations have already been made, and are being made, by the University in preparation for new conditions likely, it is thought, to become urgent as soon as Peace comes. It remains to be seen how these particular Statutes and Regulations will work. I think that the future is still too obscure to warrant preparations which go into detail. I shall therefore content myself with putting forward some general considerations which, as it seems to me, ought to govern all detail, when the time comes for going into detail—general considerations involving the acceptance of the two propositions which I have placed at the head of this pamphlet.

I.

OXFORD has hitherto made the imparting of a liberal education her principal concern. Were she to make it less than her principal concern she would break the continuity of her life irreparably, and renounce her claim to a great place in the English-speaking world of the future. As an institution concerned principally with the production of specialists she might hold a respectable place in that world, but certainly would not hold a great place. In order, however, to maintain the continuity of her life in the altered circumstances of the New Age, she must reform her scheme of a liberal education in the sense of assigning a place in it to Natural Science by the side of Humane Letters themselves more broadly conceived.

I am not going to face the difficulty of defining a 'liberal education,' but will try to turn it by means of a description: Where a liberal education is concerned the student must be an *amateur*. He must not think of what his study of a subject 'will lead to.' He must not

even care to 'advance our knowledge' of the subject. He must treat his study of it simply as a delightful and self-sufficient employment of leisure. The University which provides the passing generations of its alumni most abundantly with the leisure which calls for and finds such employment comes nearest to the ideal of a University. A liberal education is what 'Philosophy' is, according to Dante—'a loving converse with wisdom'—*Filosofia è uno amorofo uso di sapienza*. It is not in the specialist's 'advancement of our knowledge,' but in the amateur's 'converse with wisdom,' that a liberal education is realised.

It is of the first importance that those who are concerned with the theory and practice of education should remember that it is not with 'serious student,' but with 'specialist,' that 'amateur' is rightly contrasted. The true 'amateur' is a 'serious student.' At a University he is one who goes through an approved curriculum of studies—always a curriculum of studies as distinguished from one special branch—under the direction of teachers who are severally experts, if not specialists, in the various branches of study included in the curriculum. In this way he lays the indispensable foundation on which he must begin to build, should he afterwards become a specialist in any one of these branches; but he is not

yet a specialist, and will probably never care to become one. He is an amateur throughout all the branches of that curriculum, even in those branches of which he makes an intensive study, as when, for example, a student reading for the Honour School of Literæ Humaniores makes an intensive study of Ancient History in that School, and treats Philosophy more slightly : he is an amateur throughout all the branches of the curriculum, and a serious amateur if he works in the spirit which makes his study a liberal education.

After this explanation, I trust that I shall not be thought to favour superficiality in our future alumni at Oxford, or to undervalue the presence of specialists among their teachers, if, in what follows, I speak of these alumni, when they study in the right way, as amateurs—as amateurs in all their undergraduate work (I am not speaking here of post-graduate work), even in that part of their Honour work to which they give intensive study, and in which some of them even look forward to becoming specialists.

Here, then, we have a common spirit, the spirit of the amateur, in which branches of very different kinds may all be studied—branches of Natural Science as well as branches of Humane Letters. Surely it is not too much to hope that influences, many of them, taken separately,

quite imponderable, which have fostered the spirit of the amateur at Oxford in the past, will not fail us at the present crisis. With the friends of Humane Letters and the friends of Natural Science both equally animated by the spirit in which a liberal education is imparted and received, the problem presented for their collaboration by the new conditions which have arisen is surely not insoluble—to find a place in a liberal education of the traditional Oxford type for Natural Science by the side of Humane Letters themselves more broadly conceived. In attempting to solve this problem, through the collaboration of these two parties, Oxford would only be showing herself still observant, in this Age, of the ideal which attracted her in the Age of Colet and Linacre—the ideal, by which the Italian Renaissance was inspired, of Humane Letters and Natural Science intimately united in one liberal discipline.

II.

It may be said that, with the foundation of the Honour School of Natural Science more than sixty years ago, Oxford actually solved the problem which I am speaking of as one still to be solved, and that nothing more is necessary than to strengthen that School by increasing the number of Natural Science Scholarships at Colleges and by amending the examinations, especially so as to encourage independent research. I have no wish to depreciate the services rendered by the Honour School of Natural Science—they have been great—nor do I look with a grudging eye at measures devised to promote its future growth, but I cannot admit that, by itself, it meets the need, which I am concerned with, of finding a place for Natural Science in a liberal education at Oxford by the side of Humane Letters. Those who, in the past, have taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts on their work for the Honour School of Natural Science have, indeed, been required to show some acquaintance with Humane Letters ; but the much larger number who

have taken the same degree on their work for schools, Pass and Class, dealing with Humane Letters, have not been required to show any acquaintance whatever with Natural Science. This is what has to be changed, so that the formula of a liberal education at Oxford may run: 'No Humane Letters without Natural Science, and no Natural Science without Humane Letters.'

There are three things, hitherto unattempted, which have to be done before one can speak of the formula being fulfilled.

The first is the careful selection of the particular kinds of Humane Letters suitable for association, as 'side subjects,' with the study of Natural Science in the case of students whose 'main subject' is Natural Science, and who are candidates for Honours in one of the branches of that subject.

The second is the selection of the kinds of Natural Science suitable for association, as 'side subjects,' with Humane Letters in the case of those whose 'main subject' is Humane Letters, and who read for Honours in one of the branches of that subject.

And, thirdly, there is the problem, perhaps the most difficult, and not the least important, of finding the just combination of Natural Science and Humane Letters in the case of those—always likely to be in the majority

among our students—who do not seek Honours on either side, but wish, equally with those who seek Honours, to enjoy a liberal education which shall make them better men in after-life—more intelligent and strenuous in profession or business, and more fit to make a happy use of leisure.

These are three difficult problems, especially difficult because the Natural Science, or Humane Letters, as the case may be, required as 'side subject,'—this is a point on which I would insist strongly—cannot be merely that which the undergraduate has brought up with him from school, and, after an entrance examination, drops at the University; it must be Natural Science, or Humane Letters, which he keeps alive throughout his whole course here as a 'side subject' together with the Humane Letters or Natural Science which is his 'main subject' in an Honour or Pass School. How is this to be done, it will be asked, by a student whose 'main' work is for an Honour School, without trenching upon time due to that 'main' work? I fear that the answer I am going to give to this question will be regarded as framed for the conditions of a Utopia rather than for those of a workaday University. It is that students should not be formally examined in the Natural Science associated, as 'side subject,' with

'main' work for an Honour School of Humane Letters, or in the Humane Letters associated, as 'side subject,' with 'main' work for an Honour School of Natural Science. For their 'side subject' these candidates for Honours should attend lectures and private instruction specially designed for them, and certificates of regular attendance and intelligent interest from the lecturers and other instructors should be deemed sufficient. I believe that the majority of the students reading under this arrangement would get just what they need from it, because their lecturers and other instructors, not being tied down to teaching for the requirements of a formal examination, would feel free to put *themselves* into their instruction—free to add just that individuality of treatment which gives a subject the quality that attracts the serious amateur. Instruction so given and received might well turn out to be the most influential in Oxford, and to be that which demanded the services of the best teachers and secured the willing attendance of the best students.

There is a feeling abroad, and it is growing, that we think too much of examinations and too little of the intrinsic value of study stimulated and directed by good teaching. It is in sympathy with this feeling, and in the hope that it may grow and bear fruit, that I have hazarded

the suggestion that, in certain cases, the study of certain subjects, stimulated and directed by good teaching, should be exempted from formal examination, and yet count towards a degree. I do not pretend that it would be as easy to present Natural Science in such a way as to make it attractive, as a 'side subject,' to amateurs whose 'main' work is in Humane Letters, as it would be to present Humane Letters in that way, as a 'side subject,' to students whose 'main' work is in Natural Science; but I believe that the difficulty could be overcome if the friends of Humane Letters and of Natural Science were to co-operate sympathetically in making a selection of the kinds of Natural Science likely to interest students of Humane Letters.

[If anyone should object *in toto* to the position I am maintaining, that the spirit of the amateur is the vital principle of a University, and, especially, should argue that to encourage the amateur in Natural Science would be to discourage the specialist in Natural Science, and so to bar progress in knowledge, I would reply that each is essential to the other. Amateur's Natural Science—which I believe to be as necessary in the New Oxford as amateur's Humane Letters if all her students are to receive a liberal education—is possible only in a University where specialist's Natural Science is at home and

valued. No man who is not a specialist in a subject can stimulate and direct amateurs in their study of that subject. The more amateurs, therefore, in Natural Science there are to be in the Oxford of the future the more need will there be for specialists in Natural Science to stimulate and direct them. And these will be specialists of the right sort, for it is only in a society where a liberal education is given—where specialists in all subjects come into close contact with amateurs in all subjects—that there are specialists of the right sort. One of the most important services which the New Oxford, if she is guided aright, may be expected to render will be that of furnishing a constant supply of highly trained specialists in Natural Science, whose specialism, unlike that of the German type, has been controlled by a liberal education common to each one of them with his colleagues in other branches, an education in which the whole man—character, taste, physique, as well as intellect—has been comprehended. The succession of distinguished medical men produced by Oxford in the past is a good index of what we may expect her specialists in all branches of Natural Science to be in the future, if she continues, in altered circumstances, still to make the imparting of a liberal education her principal concern.

What branches of Natural Science are likely to be most suitable, as 'side subjects,' for undergraduate students whose 'main' work (still, although 'main' work, always amateur's work) is in the field of Humane Letters? I think that those branches of Natural Science are likely to be most suitable (1) which border upon the Moral Sciences, and (2) which appeal to the out-of-doors tastes of English-speaking folk. To the first category belong Geography, studied as a science of physical conditions which have historical, political, military, and commercial effects to be traced; Anthropology as it may be studied in the Pitt-Rivers Museum; and Experimental Psychology. To the second category belong Agricultural Science, Forestry, and, perhaps, Geology, Botany, and Zoology, so far, at least, as 'field-work' is concerned. Other suitable branches could, doubtless, be mentioned; but these seem to me to be branches which a large number of Oxford students, country-bred, and hoping to return to country life at home, would take to *con amore*, as 'side subjects,' under the easy conditions which I have suggested; nor do I think that they would be without attraction for students looking forward to life in India, Africa, and other parts, as Civil Servants or men of business. With regard, especially, to Agricultural Science, I should like to say that the amateur's study of

it, whether as a 'side subject,' or as a 'main subject' (leading up, in some cases, to a specialist's study), seems to me to be peculiarly suitable here. Oxford is a great landowner, and ought to promote the scientific study of agriculture by establishing experimental farms within easy distance, and in every other way in her very extensive power. She would be doing a great service to the nation if she boldly took the lead in this matter.

With regard to the branches of Humane Letters which might be selected for the 'side subjects' of those whose 'main subjects' are in the field of Natural Science, I would say that Modern History, English Literature, English Philosophy—especially Moral and Political—and Economics, should certainly find places in the list; and courses under the newly established Committee for the Fine Arts would probably deserve to be included in it.

III.

I NOW go on to offer some observations on reform in the field of Humane Letters as cultivated by students whose 'main,' as distinguished from 'side' subjects, lie within it. I take for granted that the necessity of widening this field is recognised. The problem for reform is to organise the elements, old and new, included in the widened field. It will be found, I think, that the organisation most conducive to the requirements of a liberal education of the traditional Oxford type is one which divides the field into groups of allied subjects, within each of which groups any one of its included subjects may be selected by a student for 'intensive' study, while he treats the other subjects included in his group 'non-intensively'—that is, as lightly as it is possible, without superficiality, to treat subjects on which he has, after all, to face a formal examination. Here the safeguard against superficiality is two-fold—the student is working as an amateur 'in loving converse with wisdom,' and he is stimulated and directed by instructors who are

specialists of the right sort, specialists who have received a liberal education.

Starting, then, from the principle that, in the interest of a liberal education, the 'intensive study' of any subject, apart from the 'non-intensive study' of related subjects with which it can be grouped, is to be avoided by the student, what I suggest is, in fact, an organisation of the whole widened field of Humane Letters into groups, or schools, modelled upon the group of subjects known as the Oxford Honour School of Literæ Humaniores. I would follow the model set by this School—which I now call 'the *Classical* School of Literæ Humaniores'—by taking languages, or peoples, as the ground on which groups should be distinguished, and marking off one group as the English, another group as the French, another as the Italian, another as the German School of Literæ Humaniores. These would be the leading new Schools of Literæ Humaniores; Spanish, Scandinavian, and Slavonic Schools might follow. The subjects included in each of these Schools would be Language and Literature, History, Religion, Philosophy, Science, Fine Art, and so forth, just as in the present Classical School of Literæ Humaniores; and these subjects would be dealt with by students in the way which it has become the practice of students in the Classical School of

Literæ Humaniores to adopt, who make an 'intensive study' of one of the grouped subjects in that School—Language and Literature, or Philosophy, or History—and a 'non-intensive study' of the other subjects, the important thing being that the student should never study one subject by itself, however thoroughly, but always a group of subjects covering the whole ground of the civilisation included in the School taken.

The English School of Literæ Humaniores is obviously the most important of these proposed new Schools of Literæ Humaniores, and in what follows I shall confine my remarks to it, only referring now to the others to say that they would each provide a scheme within which the study of a Modern Language would take its place in close connexion with the study of the history, literature, and philosophy of the people speaking that language. The demand for the better recognition of Modern Languages at Oxford would be met in this way in conformity with the conditions of a liberal education, while the utilitarian study of Modern Languages, for professional ends, on the part of students receiving their liberal education outside these new Schools of Literæ Humaniores would not be interfered with. I may add that the 'intensive study' of Modern Philosophy at Oxford would gain greatly from inclusion

in these foreign Schools of Literæ Humaniores, for philosophical works, like poems, to be rightly appreciated, must be read in the languages in which they are conceived and written. It would be an immense gain to the study of French or German Philosophy if students had to read it in its own language; not to mention the gain of reading it in connexion with French or German History and Literature. A student who wished to make an 'intensive study' of French or German Philosophy would take the French or German School of Literæ Humaniores, just as he would take the Classical or the English School of Literæ Humaniores if he wished to make an 'intensive study' of Ancient or of English Philosophy. In every case, of course, the student would take reasonable account of philosophy outside that written in the language of his special choice.

I pass now to speak particularly of the English School of Literæ Humaniores. Among the proposed new Schools of Literæ Humaniores it is the one which holds out the greatest promise of usefulness, for this reason, that it would consolidate the studies of students from all parts of the English-speaking world whom we hope to see attracted in large numbers to Oxford. These students who, under present arrangements, would be studying separately, some of them Modern History, some of them

English Language and Literature, would find themselves all working together for the same School, to which students who wished to study Philosophy at Oxford, but were unable or unwilling to study it in the Classical School, or in one of the foreign Schools of *Literæ Humaniores*, would have recourse. And the advantage which the study of Philosophy at Oxford would derive from this reform would be great. On the one hand Philosophy would no longer be confined to the Classical School of *Literæ Humaniores*, and, on the other hand, the grave error would be avoided of making it a subject to be taken by itself in some School, or Diploma Course, of Philosophy, where it would be taught and learnt in the spirit of the mere specialist. The mere specialist in Philosophy is as undesirable a citizen of the Commonwealth of 'those who know' as the mere specialist in some branch of Natural Science or of Scholarship. But as one subject in the group of subjects studied together in the English School of *Literæ Humaniores*, Philosophy would be studied in a manner as consonant with the conditions of a liberal education as that in which it is now studied in the Classical School of *Literæ Humaniores*. Of course, the student of Philosophy in the English School, as compared with the student of it in the Classical School, would be at a disadvantage if he wished, afterwards, to specialise

in Philosophy to the extent required of a teacher of that subject. Philosophy cannot be taught in the best manner by one who has not first-hand acquaintance with the original and greatest exponents of European Philosophy, who were Greeks. It might, therefore, be advisable, in the interest of Philosophy—and of Literature too—in the English School of Literæ Humaniores, to provide that knowledge of Greek and Latin, although not indispensable, should count heavily for the highest honours. With or without such a provision there is, however, a strong case for making it possible to study Philosophy at Oxford in an English School as well as in the Classical School.

In advocating this new alternative way of studying Philosophy at Oxford I trust that it will not be thought that I am indifferent to the maintenance of the old way. I believe that Oxford, as a seat of liberal education, would have the continuity of her life broken in the most serious manner if Philosophy, as it has been studied in the Classical School of Literæ Humaniores, were dropped—that is, Philosophy studied in its mother-tongue, and taken very closely with the History, Religion, Science, Literature, and Art of Greece. The effect of studying Philosophy in this way is, in the case of most students, the perfecting of the liberal education which they receive at Oxford ;

while, in the case of a few, it lays the most important part of the foundation which they go on to build upon as specialists in Philosophy. The study of the Greek masters, especially of Plato and Aristotle, must remain deeply rooted in her educational system if Oxford is to be true to herself—the ‘non-intensive’ study of these masters for the bulk of her classical students, the ‘intensive study’ of them for a few. But the number of students who come up to Oxford with the necessary classical preparation from schools or other Universities in the United Kingdom is, I feel sure, bound to decrease ; while most of the over-sea students will be non-classical. If, then, our non-classical students, in the future, are to study Philosophy according to the spirit of the Oxford tradition, the great majority of them must study it in an English School of Literæ Humaniores, a few of them, perhaps, studying it in the other new Schools of Literæ Humaniores. In the English School of Literæ Humaniores they would read the great masters of English Philosophy in the setting—political, religious, scientific, literary—of their lives and times. They would find that these great masters were, many of them, men of affairs, most of them men of the world in close contact with men of affairs, not a caste apart of professorial specialists of the German type, but

amateurs—great amateurs, such as were Bacon and Hobbes, the Cambridge Platonists, Cumberland, Shaftesbury, Locke, Butler, Berkeley, Price, Hume, Adam Smith, Bentham, and others like them, nearer our own time, and in it. If our students are to be 'amateurs,' how fortunate it is that those of them who must study Philosophy without Greek should have such English-speaking guides as these !

IV.

WHILE the establishment of an English School of Literæ Humaniores on the lines indicated would secure the continued life of Philosophy at Oxford, threatened by the growing shortage of classically trained students, and would broaden and deepen the study of Modern History, it is in connexion with the study of English Literature that I would look for the most far-reaching influence of the School. The leading thought in my mind, as I write this pamphlet, is always this: that Oxford must now, without breaking the continuity of her life, prepare for the reception of students from distant parts of the English-speaking world. A certain number of them will come with the intention of beginning or continuing work, as specialists, in various branches of Natural Science and Humane Letters, and will bring with them the previous education necessary for such post-graduate work. This limited class of students will doubtless find in Oxford all that they want in the matter of instruction. But the majority of the new students from

distant parts of the English-speaking world will not come to Oxford to be made specialists. They will come, as amateurs, to get a liberal education which shall help them to play their part in life. And they will have little or no Latin, and no Greek. What better thing could Oxford do for them than to make them feel and understand the greatness and beauty of English Literature? Success in bringing the greatness and beauty of English Literature, especially of English Poetry, home to the hearts and minds of generations of students from all parts, distant and near, of the English-speaking world would, indeed, be an achievement worthy of Oxford, and one, I venture to think, she is naturally fitted to accomplish. Among my reasons for wishing to see an English School of Literæ Humaniores established, the one to which, perhaps, I attach the most weight, is that the School would be a means towards this great achievement.

I am carefully avoiding all discussion of the comparative attractiveness to Americans and others of this, that, and the other Degree to be granted. The question is not so important as it is thought in some quarters to be. At any rate, its importance is temporary. What is of permanent importance is that a liberal education should be given at Oxford to the new men by means of studies, if not new, at any rate

pursued in new circumstances ; and I believe that, if the education given is good, it will, in the long run, attract students from all parts independently of the carefully prepared bait, or fly, of Doctorates and the like.

To the reasons which I have given for the establishment of an English School of Literæ Humaniores I would now add my impression that if, as I believe, English Literature is the subject within that School which the majority of our new students would be likely to make their subject of 'intensive' study, then Latin, and even Greek, would, *ipso facto*, be encouraged. Those students who, in view of becoming teachers of English Literature, or for other reasons, first made an 'intensive study' of that subject while reading for the School, and afterwards a specialist's separate study of it, would, of course, find a first-hand knowledge of Greek and Latin authors indispensable ; but also many who made an 'intensive study' of English Literature, as a subject included in the School, without any thought of afterwards specialising in it, would, I think, do their best to make themselves acquainted, or better acquainted, with relevant Latin, and even Greek, authors in the original languages. In this way it might well turn out to be the case that it was to the growth of the study of English Literature (the study of English Philosophy contributing)

within the English School of Literæ Humaniores that Latin and Greek largely owed the continued vitality which all friends of a liberal education trust they will maintain at Oxford. Of course, one may look forward with satisfaction to the possibility, or probability, of this result, and yet believe, as I do, that the study of English Literature may be carried on with great success, and even become the premier study in a liberal education, where the bulk of the students have no Latin and no Greek. English Literature is well taught, and takes its place as an element in a liberal education, when teachers and pupils are inspired with the sense of its greatness and beauty. This sense comes from reading, and rereading, and pondering masterpieces.

To bring the influence of masterpieces steadily to bear upon the feeling and imagination of her students is the first thing of all that Oxford must do if she would make the study of English Literature a vital element in the liberal education which she offers to the newcomers. Minute scholarship, philological and historical, may aid, but cannot take the place of the sense of greatness and beauty which comes from the reading and pondering of masterpieces. Even for the senior pupils of the Elementary School the beginning of a liberal education (to be carried on in the Continuation School) might

be made by means of English masterpieces—passages from the English Bible and from the great Poets—read daily, with hardly any comment, by teachers who have the rare power of reading well.

V.

I do not think that Oxford, in the New Age, will find any difficulty whatever in providing instruction for specialists. That she should provide it as required will be taken as a matter of course, and money will be forthcoming for such a tangible object. It is where the intangible is concerned—where a liberal, not a specialist's, education has to be provided—that her difficulty will lie. I have offered some suggestions as to how the difficulty may be overcome by new courses of study introduced and old ones reformed; but I have left to the last the mention of what is, in my view, the *conditio sine qua non* of success in the carrying out of these suggestions. This is that 'the Lecture' should not be allowed to oust 'the Private Hour.' 'The private hour,' in its origin an incident of life according to 'the College System,' is indigenous in Oxford. It is one of the most characteristic features of our teaching, and has been largely responsible for the high position which Oxford has held in the past as a seat of liberal education. A liberal

education can be given and received only where personal influence is potent; and nowhere is it so potent—and reciprocally so potent—as in ‘the private hour,’ when the teacher is engaged in face-to-face talk with his pupil. An educational system which relies on ‘the lecture’ alone, or mainly, gives the very opposite of a liberal education; for ‘the lecture’ is, after all, along with ‘the public meeting,’ ‘the legislative assembly,’ ‘the street,’ ‘the bank-holiday,’ ‘the queue,’ a species of the genus ‘Crowd,’ the ‘psychology’ of which, as worked out by recent investigators in France and this country, is so full of warning for all who are concerned with social problems generally, and with problems of education in particular. A system which relies entirely, or mainly, on ‘the lecture’ produces standardised results—students who have all taken down the same notes. ‘The lecture’ ought to be only occasional in a system which aims at giving a liberal education, and its function is to stimulate and inform persons who refuse to be standardised, who insist upon being themselves. It is in ‘the private hour,’ or its equivalent, the small conversational class, that such persons are produced, for there the pupil’s own difficulties come to the front, and he himself takes a large part in the solution of them. It is in ‘the private hour,’ in fact, that students succeed, in

the end, in finding themselves—in actualising themselves in studies of which they are become *amateurs*. And it is, after all, out of the number of amateurs so put in possession of themselves and of a liberal education that the best specialists will always be recruited—original specialists, not specialists who are hacks. There is, indeed, nothing in our Oxford tradition that ought to be more jealously guarded than ‘the Private Hour.’

‘The Exchange of Lecturers’ between Universities, of which we are beginning to hear a good deal, is a proposal which Oxford ought to receive with caution, lest ‘exchange’ should result in a multitude of crowded lectures taking the place of ‘the private hour.’ It is true that the system to which ‘the private hour’ belongs—‘the College System’—costs more money per student than the system which relies entirely, or mainly, on ‘the lecture.’ But where a liberal education is concerned it is unwise to count the cost narrowly.

In conclusion, let me add a few words to meet an objection which is very likely to be brought against my treatment of the subject of this pamphlet—namely, that I have ignored the ‘practical difficulties’ which beset the working of the scheme of reform which I have outlined.

I am fully aware of the existence of ‘practical difficulties.’ They relate to finance, to time

which students of various classes and provenance can spare for residence at Oxford, and to the nature of the courses of study proposed ; and I am prepared to be told by my critics that neither the University, nor the Colleges, nor the Students, respectively, would be able to bear the cost of the scheme for the maintenance of a liberal education at Oxford which I have outlined ; and that, even were the scheme financially feasible, the majority of the newcomers, especially of the over-sea newcomers, would not be able to spare the time required by the scheme, even if they were attracted by the curriculum which it contains. The majority of the new students, I shall be told, especially of the over-sea students, will come with, or more often without, a liberal education to their credit, in order to take short post-graduate courses of specialist, or quasi-specialist, study, crowned with a Doctorate ; they will have nothing to do with the long and exacting undergraduate curriculum of an English, or any other, School of Literæ Humaniores, with its accompanying 'side subject.'

Of the existence of the 'practical difficulties' indicated above, and, in particular, of the formidable 'practical difficulty' of saving the wide and complex system of conditions necessary to a liberal education of the Oxford

type from dissolution in face of the incursion of a host of small separate specialist or quasi-specialist courses—of the existence of these ‘practical difficulties’ I have all along been fully aware, but have deliberately abstained from discussing them, just because I believe that to discuss them now is not a ‘practical’ thing to do. When a great cause is at stake, and has to be upheld—and the cause of a liberal education at Oxford is now at stake—it is not ‘practical’ to begin with a consideration of the difficulties which make success unlikely. It is ‘practical’ to begin with the assumption that the cause must be upheld in spite of difficulties, and then to think out the most thorough method of upholding it—as I have tried to do in my scheme with its two main features: first, ‘side subjects’ for all undergraduates, so that there shall be ‘no Natural Science without Humane Letters, and no Humane Letters without Natural Science’; and, secondly, ‘New Schools of Literæ Humaniores’—especially an ‘English School of Literæ Humaniores’—modelled on the existing Classical School of Literæ Humaniores, so that non-classical undergraduates—a body bound to increase in number—may study History, Literature, Philosophy, and other connected branches, as a liberal education requires them to be studied. If a liberal education is to continue

to be given by Oxford in the New Age, I feel sure that, perhaps not exactly this scheme, but, at any rate, one very like it must be adopted ; and I would trust the scheme, once adopted, to overcome, by its 'way-on,' the 'practical difficulties' which have been alluded to, and others not yet in sight.

My reply to critics who may complain that I have made no attempt in this pamphlet to dispose of 'practical difficulties' is that I have written it in the belief that, when a great cause has to be upheld, at a crisis, it is 'practical' to leave the cause itself, as it wins its way, to dispose of the difficulties.

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