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THE NEW DEPARTURE  
IN  
COLLEGE EDUCATION

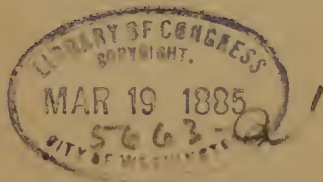
*BEING A REPLY TO PRESIDENT ELIOT'S  
DEFENCE OF IT IN NEW YORK*

*FEB. 24, 1885*

✓  
BY

JAMES McCOSH, D.D., LL.D., D.L.

PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON COLLEGE



NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
1885

L B 2363  
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TROW'S  
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY,  
NEW YORK.

## THE NEW DEPARTURE IN COLLEGE EDUCATION.

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I HAVE been drawn into this three-cornered debate<sup>1</sup> by no merit or demerit of mine. I was told by the Nineteenth Century Club that the President of Harvard was to advocate what was called his "new departure," and I was invited to criticize it. I have noticed with considerable anxiety that departure as going on for years past without parents or the public noticing it. I am glad that things have come to a crisis. Fathers and mothers and the friends of education will now know what is proposed, what is in fact going on, and will have to decide forthwith whether they are to fall in with and encourage it, or are to oppose it.

I asked first what the question was. President Eliot has shaped it as follows: "IN A UNIVERSITY THE STUDENT MUST CHOOSE HIS STUDIES AND GOVERN HIMSELF." I saw at once that the question thus announced was large and loose, vague and ambiguous, plausible to the ear, but with no definite meaning. But it commits its author to a positive position and gives me room to defend a great and good cause. The form is showy but I can expose it; I can

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<sup>1</sup> The Nineteenth Century Club meant to make the debate three-cornered, but somehow one of the sides of the triangle fell out, and instead of a triangle we have two sides facing each other.

prick the bubble so that all may know how little matter is inside.

On the one hand I am sorry that the defence of solid and high education should have devolved on me rather than on some more gifted advocate. But on the other hand I feel it to be a privilege that I am invited to oppose proposals which are fitted, without the people as yet seeing it, to throw back in America (as Bacon expresses it) "The Advancement of Learning."

I will not allow any one (without protest) to charge me with being antiquated, or old-fashioned, or behind the age—I may be an old man but I cherish a youthful spirit. For sixteen years I was a professor in the youngest and one of the most advanced universities in Great Britain, and I have now been sixteen years in an American college, and in both I have labored to elevate the scholarship. I act on the principle that every new branch of what has shown itself to be true learning is to be introduced into a college. My friends in America have encouraged me by generously giving me millions of money to carry out this idea. I am as much in favor of progress as President Eliot, but I go on in a different, I believe a better way. I adopt the new, I retain what is good in the old. I am disappointed, I am grieved when I find another course pursued which allows, which encourages, which tempts young men in their caprice to choose easy subjects, and which are not fitted to enlarge or refine the mind, to produce scholars, or to send forth the great body of the students as educated gentlemen.

Freedom is the catch-word of this new departure. It is a precious and an attractive word. But, O Liberty! what crimes and cruelties have been perpetrated in thy name! It is a bid for popularity. An entering Freshman will be apt to cheer when he hears it—the prospect is so pleasant.

The leader in this departure will have many followers. The student infers from the language that he can study what he pleases. I can tell you what he will possibly or probably choose. Those who are in the secrets of colleges know how skilful certain students are in choosing their subjects. They can choose the branches which will cost them least study, and put themselves under the popular professors who give them the highest grades with the least labor. I once told a student in an advanced stage of his course, "If you had shown as much skill in pursuing your studies as in choosing the easiest subjects you would have been the first man in your class." I am for freedom quite as much as Dr. Eliot is, but it is for freedom regulated by law. I am for liberty but not licentiousness, which always ends in servitude.

I am to follow the President of Harvard in the three roads which he has taken ; placing positions of mine face to face with his :

- I. FREEDOM IN CHOOSING STUDIES.
  - II. FREEDOM IN CHOOSING SPECIALTIES.
  - III. FREEDOM IN GOVERNMENT.
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## I.

*Freedom in Choosing Studies.*—I am for freedom, but it must be within carefully defined limits. First, a young man should be free to enter a university or not to enter it. He is to be free to choose his department in that university, say Law or Medicine, or the Academic terminating in the Bachelor or Master's Degree. But, having made his choice, is he to have all possible freedom ever after? At this point the most liberal advocate of liberty will be obliged to tell the student, "We are now required to lay

some restraints upon you," and the youth finds his liberty is at an end. He has to take certain studies and give a certain amount of time to them, say, according to the Harvard model, to select four topics. He goes in for Medicine: he may make his "quartette" Physical Geography, which tells what climate is; and Art, which teaches us to paint the human frame; and Music, which improves the voice; and Lectures on the Drama, which show us how to assume noble attitudes. These seem more agreeable to him than Anatomy and Physiology, than Surgery and Materia Medica, which present corpses and unpleasant odors. I tell you that, though this youth should get a diploma written on parchment, I would not, however ill, call him in to prescribe to me, as I might not be quite sure whether his medicines would kill or cure me. Or the intention of the youth is Engineering in order to make or drive a steam engine, and he does not take Mathematics, or Mechanics, or Graphics, or Geodesy; but as unlimited choice is given him, he prefers drawing and field work—when the weather is fine, and two departments of gymnastics—now so well taught in our colleges—namely, boxing and wrestling. I tell you I am not to travel by the railway he has constructed. But he has a higher aim: he is to take a course in the Liberal Arts and expects a Master's Degree; but Greek and Mathematics and Physics and Mental Philosophy are all old and waxing older, and he takes French to enable him to travel in Europe, and Lectures on Goethe to make him a German scholar, and a Pictorial History of the age of Louis XIV., and of the Theatre in ancient and modern times. This is a good year's work, and he can take a like course in each of the four years; and if he be in Yale or Princeton College, he will in Spring and Fall substitute Base Ball and Foot Ball, and exhibit feats more wonderful than



were ever performed in the two classical countries, Greece and Rome, at their famous Olympian Games and Bull Fights.

I have presented this designedly rude picture to show that there must be some limits put to the freedom of choice in studies. The able leader of the new departure, with the responsibilities of a great College upon him, and the frank and honest gentleman, who has such a dread of a Fetish—the creature of his own imagination—will be ready to admit that in every department of a University there should be a well considered and a well devised curriculum of study. It is one of the highest and most important functions of the governing bodies to construct such a scheme. It should have in it two essential powers or properties.

*First, there should be branches required of all students who pursue the full course and seek a degree.* This is done in such departments as Engineering and Medicine and should be done in Arts. The obligatory branches should be wisely selected. They should all be fitted to enlarge or refine the mind. They should be fundamental, as forming the basis on which other knowledge is built. They should be disciplinary, as training the mind for further pursuits. Most of them should have stood the test of time and reared scholars in ages past. There will be found to be a wonderful agreement among educated men of high tastes as to what these should be.

There should be included in them the eight studies on which examinations are held in order to entrance into Harvard College. These are 1, English; 2, Greek; 3, Latin; 4, German; 5, French; 6, History; 7, Mathematics; 8, Physical Science. This is the scheme of preparatory studies just issued by Harvard. It seems to me to require too much from our schools. It will prevent

many teachers who have hitherto sent students to college from doing so any more. Teachers in smaller towns and country districts will have to look to this. If the scheme is carried out fewer young men will come up to our colleges from such places. They will find that they cannot get French and German and physical apparatus in the schools available to them. Some of the branches had better be reserved for college, where they will be taught more effectively. But passing this by as not just to our present point, I put all these cardinal studies in the branches which should be required in a college.

In the farther courses of a college other obligatory studies should be added, such as Biology, including Botany and Zoology, Geology, Political Economy or better Social Science, and at least three branches of Mental Science, Psychology, Logic, and Ethics. All these by a wise arrangement could be taught in the three or four years at school and the four years of college. They should be judiciously spread over the years of school and college training; a certain number of them in each successive year for every student. They should advance with the age and progress of the student. They should follow one after another in logical order from the more elementary to the higher, which presuppose the lower. Thus Mathematics should come before Physics, and Biology before Geology, and Psychology before Logic and Ethics.

Education is essentially the training of the mind—as the word *educare* denotes—the drawing forth of the faculties which God has given us. This it should especially be in a University, in a *Studium Generale*, as it used to be called. The powers of mind are numerous and varied, the senses, the memory, the fancy, judgment, reasoning, conscience, the feelings, the will; the mathematical, the metaphysical, the mechanical, the poetical, the prosaic (quite as useful

as any); and all these should be cultivated, the studies necessary to do so should be provided, and the student required so far to attend to them, that the young man by exercise may know what powers he has and the mental frame be fully developed. To accomplish this end the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and of Master of Arts were instituted. These titles have acquired a meaning. For centuries past tens of thousands of eager youths have been yearly seeking for them and the attainments implied in them. True, the standard adopted in some colleges has been low—some who have got the diploma could not read the Latin in which it is written; still it has a certain prestige and a considerable attractive power. It indicates, as to the great body of those who possess it, that they have some acquaintance with elevated themes, that in short they have some culture. I do not wish to have this stimulus withdrawn. I have been laboring for the last thirty-two years to elevate the requirements for the degree. But let it retain its meaning and carry out its meaning thoroughly. Let it be an evidence that the possessor of it has some knowledge of literature, science, and philosophy.

I have no objection that other degrees be instituted, such as Bachelor of Literature, Bachelor of Science, but only on one condition, that examinations be deep, that they be rigid, that they imply a knowledge of the principles as well as of the details of the branches taught, that they cultivate the mind and elevate the tastes as well as fit men for professions. But let us retain in the meanwhile the old Bachelor and Master Degrees, only putting a new life into them. They should not be given to one who knows merely English and German, or one who knows merely chemistry and physics, still less to one who knows merely music and painting. Eminence in these has no right to assume, or in fact steal, the old title. Let each kind of degree have

its own meaning and people will value it accordingly. But let A.B. and A.M. abide to attract youths to high general scholarship.

Under this Academic Degree I would allow a certain amount of choice of studies, such as could not be tolerated in professional departments, as Law or Medicine. But there are branches which no candidate for the degree should be allowed to avoid. There should be English, which I agree with President Eliot in regarding as about the most essential of all branches, it being taught in a scientific manner. There should be Modern Languages, but there should also be Classics. A taste and a style are produced by the study of the Greek and Latin with their literatures, which are expressively called *Classic*. It may be difficult to define, but we all feel the charm of it. If we lose this there is nothing in what is called our Modern Education to make up for the loss. President Eliot has a high opinion of German Universities, but the eminent men in their greatest University, that of Berlin, have testified that a far higher training is given in the Classical Gymnasia than in the scientific Real Schule.<sup>1</sup>

There should be physical science, but there should also be mental and moral science required of all. In knowing other things our young men should be taught to know themselves. When our students are instructed only in matter they are apt to conclude that there is nothing but matter. Our colleges should save our promising youths, the hope of the coming age and ages, from materialism

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Hoffmann, as Rector of Berlin University, says that it is the opinion of the University that "all efforts to find a substitute for the classical languages, whether in mathematics, in the modern languages or in the natural sciences, have been hitherto unsuccessful." In Princeton College Dr. Young and the scientific professors unanimously are, if possible, more strongly in favor of Latin and Greek than even the classical professors.

with its degrading consequences. We must show them that man has a soul with lofty powers of reason and conscience and free will, which make him immortal and enable him so far to penetrate the secrets of nature, and by which he can rise to the knowledge of God.

We in Princeton believe in a Trinity of studies: in Language and Literature, in Science, and in Philosophy. Every educated man should know so much of each of these. Without this, man's varied faculties are not trained, his nature is not fully developed and may become malformed.

A college should give what is best to its students, and it should not tempt them to what is lower when the higher can be had. Harvard boasts that it gives two hundred choices to its students, younger and older.<sup>1</sup> I confess that I have had some difficulty in understanding her catalogue. I would rather study the whole Cosmos. It has a great many perplexities, which I can compare only to the cycles, epicycles, eccentricities of the old astronomy, so much more complex than that of Newton. An examina-

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<sup>1</sup> In Princeton we have nearly all the branches taught in Harvard, but we do not subdivide and scatter them as they do; we put them under compacted heads. In his address to the Johns Hopkins University, Dr. Eliot refers to the supposed deficiency in teaching history in Princeton. In reply I have to state that we have a small examination on the subject for entrance; that in the Sophomore year we use one of Freeman's text-books to give an elementary view of universal history; that in the Junior and Senior the Professor of the Philosophy of History gives a historical and critical survey of the science and methods of history. More particularly each Professor is expected to give a history of his own branch, and so we have histories of Politics, of Philosophy, of Greece, of Rome, of the literature of Germany and of France, etc. I do not agree with Mr. J. S. Mill that history cannot be taught in a college (it would take forty years and more to go over all history); but I think the numerous narrative histories of epochs is just a let-off to easy-going students from the studies which require thought.

tion of students upon it would be a better test of a clear head than some of their subjects, such as "French Plays and Novels." As I understand it, one seeking a degree, may, in his free will choose the following course :

*In Sophomore Year—*

1. French Literature of the Seventeenth Century.
2. Mediæval and Modern European History.
3. Elementary Course in Fine Art, with collateral instruction in Water-coloring.
4. Counterpoint (in music).

*In Junior Year—*

1. French Literature of the Eighteenth Century.
2. Early Mediæval History.
3. Botany.
4. History of Music.

*In Senior Year—*

1. French Literature of the Nineteenth Century.
2. Elementary Spanish.
3. Greek Art.
4. Free Thematic Music.<sup>1</sup>

There are twenty such dilettanti courses which may be taken in Harvard. I cannot allow that this is an advance in scholarship. If this be the modern education, I hold that the old is better. I would rather send a young man, in whom I was interested, to one of the old-fashioned colleges of the country, where he would be constrained to study Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Rhetoric, Physics, Logic, Ethics, and Political Economy, and I am persuaded that his mind would thereby be better trained and he himself prepared to do higher and more important work in life. From

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<sup>1</sup> In the debate we were told that this is a deep study; then the Degree of Master of Music (M.M.) should be given to it, but not M.A.

the close of Freshman year on it is perfectly practicable for a student to pass through Harvard and receive the degree of Bachelor of Arts, without taking any course in Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, Geology, Logic, Psychology, Ethics, Political Economy, German, or even English! (If, as President Eliot insists, a knowledge of our mother-tongue is the true basis of culture, what is to be said of this?)

*Secondly. It should be an essential feature of the course for a degree, that the attendance of the student on lectures and recitations should be obligatory.* This is a very important matter. The student may have freedom in his choice, but having made his election he should be bound to attend on the instruction imparted. He should not be allowed to attend the one day and stay away the next. A professor should not be subjected to the disadvantage of only a portion of his students, say a half or a third, being present at any one lecture, and of the students who attend not being the same continuously. Parents living far away from the college-seat should have some security that their sons professing to be at college are not all the winter skating on the ice, or shooting canvasback-ducks on Chesapeake Bay.

But it is said that if a student can stand an examination, it is no matter where he gets his knowledge. There is an enormous fallacy lurking here. I admit that a youth may make himself a scholar without being at a college or submitting to its examinations. But if he goes to college let him take all its advantages. One of these is to be placed under a continuous course of instruction in weekly, almost daily, intercourse with his professors, keeping him at his work and encouraging him in it. It is thus that the academic taste, thus that the student spirit with its hard work is created and fostered.

I have had thorough means of becoming acquainted with those systems in which there is no required attendance; and I testify that they do not tend to train high scholars. Everything depending on a final examination, the student is sure to be tempted to what is called *cramming*. A student once told me what this led to in his own experience. In five of the branches taught to his class, he spread his daily studies over the year; but in one he trusted to cramming. I said to him, "Tell me honestly what is the issue." He answered, "In the five branches I remember everything and could stand another examination to-day, but in the one—it happened to be botany—it is only four weeks since I was examined on it, but my mind is a blank on the whole subject."

I know that in Germany they produce scholars without requiring a rigid attendance, and I rather think that in a few American colleges, they are aping this German method, thinking to produce equally diligent students. They forget that the Germans have one powerful safeguard which we have not in America. For all offices in Church and State there is an examination by high scholars following the college course. A young man cannot get an office as clergyman, as teacher, as postmaster, till he is passed by that terrible examining bureau, and if he is turned by them his prospects in life are blasted.<sup>1</sup> Let the State of Massachusetts pass a law like the Prussian, and Harvard may then relax attendance, and the State will do what the colleges have neglected to do.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Germans have, besides, their admirable gymnasien, where all is prescribed, and which give instruction equivalent to that of the Freshman and Sophomore years in American colleges.

<sup>2</sup> President Eliot would not have students enter college till they are eighteen years of age. If this be carried out it is evident that we shall have fewer young men taking a college education. A large number



## II.

*Specialties in Study.*—Men have special talents, and so they should have special studies provided for them. They are to have special vocations in life, and college youth should so far be prepared for them. Every student should have Obligatory studies, but he should also be allowed Elective studies. The branches of knowledge are now so numerous and literature is so wide and varied, that no one can master it all; should he try to do so, he would only be “a jack of all trades and a master of none.”

The student should have two kinds of electives provided for him. He may be allowed to take subjects which could not be required of all, such, for example, as Sanscrit, Anglo-Saxon, the Semitic Tongues, and in science, Histology and Physical Geography. No college should make these obligatory, and yet considerable numbers of students would prize them much and get great benefit from them, to fit them for their farther study and life-work. Or, the student, after taking certain elementary branches, should have higher forms of the same provided for him, and be encouraged to take them. Of all the rudimentary branches or cardinal studies, there should be a course or courses required of all in order to make them educated gentlemen,

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cannot afford to continue till twenty-five before they earn any money; not entering college till eighteen, continuing three or four years and spending other three years in learning a profession. In many cases many young men might be ready to enter college at sixteen, graduate at twenty, and then learn their professions. This would suit the great body of students. But one in ten, or one in five who have acquired a taste for more should be encouraged to remain in college, to take post-graduate courses, and devote themselves to special studies. We encourage this in Princeton by seven or eight endowed Fellowships, and have always 30, 40, or 50 post-graduate students. In this way we hope to rear scholars.

but there should be advanced courses—Electives, to produce high scholars in all branches, literary, linguistic, scientific, philosophic. All students should know several of the highest languages, ancient and modern, but there should be advanced linguistic studies, and especially a science of Comparative Language. I defy you to make all master Quaternions, or Quantics, or Functions, but these should be in the college for a select few. All should be taught the fundamental laws of the human mind, but there should also be a number entering into the depths and climbing the heights, of the Greek, the Scotch, and the German philosophies.

I hold that in a college with the variety there should be a unity. The circle of the sciences should have a wide circumference but also a fixed centre. In every year there should be certain primary and radical studies required of every student, with all the while a diversity in his electives. This I take the liberty of saying is the difference between Harvard and Princeton. In Harvard there are now in no year any studies obligatory on all except a part of Freshman year studies—everything is scattered like the star dust out of which worlds are formed. Greek is not obligatory; Mathematics are not obligatory; Logic and Ethics are not obligatory. In Princeton a number of disciplinary branches are required, and so many are required in each year to give us a central sun with rotating planets. In Nature, as Herbert Spencer has shown, there is differentiation which scatters, but there is also concentration which holds things together. There should be the same in higher education. In a college there may be, there should be specialists, but not mere specialists, who are sure to be narrow, partial, malformed, one-sided, and are apt to become conceited, prejudiced, and intolerant. The other day a gymnast showed me his upper arm with

the muscle large and hard as a mill-stone. It is a picture of the mental monstrosities produced by certain kinds of education. The tanner insists that "there is nothing like leather," and the *literateur*, that there is nothing like language; while the mathematician assures you that there is nothing to be believed except what can be demonstrated; leading Goethe to say, "As if, forsooth, things only exist when they can be mathematically demonstrated. It would be foolish in a man not to believe in his mistress' love because she could not prove it to him mathematically; she can mathematically prove her dowry but not her love."

Dr. Eliot tells us he has found great difficulties in combining the Prescribed and the Elective Courses. In my thirty-two years' college teaching I have met with no such difficulty. On the contrary I have found them working in harmony. Thus I have found the Prescribed study in Greek helping me in the Elective History of Philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

It is now shown that all science is correlated, and every one thing depends on every other. Humboldt had his "Cosmos," and Mr. Grove his "Correlation of the Forces," and the Duke of Argyll has his "Unity of Nature." Nature is a system like the solar, with a sun in the centre and planets and satellites all around, held together by a gravitating power which keeps each in its proper place, and all shining on each other. You cannot study any one part comprehensively without so far knowing the others. In like manner, all the parts of a good college curriculum should be connected in an organic whole. Make a man a mere specialist and the chance is he will not reach the highest eminence as a specialist. The youth most likely to make discoveries is one who has studied collateral sub-

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<sup>1</sup> At the New York meeting I distributed the *Plan of Study in Princeton College*, showing how we carry into practical operation the principles laid down in this paper and combine the general with the special.

jects ; the well gushes out at a certain point because the rains have descended on a large surface and entered the earth, and must find an outlet.

I may here point out the evils little noticed arising from a boy having too many choices ; they say two hundred in Harvard. I believe that comparatively few young men know what their powers are when they enter college. Many do not yet know what their undeveloped faculties are ; quite as many imagine that they have talents which they do not possess. Fatal mistakes may arise from a youth of sixteen or eighteen committing himself to a narrow-gauge line of study, and he finds when it is too late that he should have taken a broader road.

A young man, we may suppose, when he enters college leaves out Greek, attracted by a popular teacher of French. When he has done so he finds, as he comes to Junior year, that a voice, as it were, from God, calls him to preach the gospel of salvation. Then he comes to see his mistake, for if he has to be an expounder of Scripture, he must know the language of the New Testament, and to attain this he must go back two or three years to school, and, unwilling to do this, he gives up studying for the ministry. The Churches of Christ will do well to look to this new departure, for they may find that they have fewer candidates for the office of the ministry. The Colleges may have to look to this, for the churches furnish to them the most constant supply of students. For myself, I fear that the issue will be an unfortunate division of colleges into Christian and infidel.

A like result may follow from other unfortunate choices, as we say, from young men "mistaking their trade." One who might have turned out a splendid teacher devotes himself to metaphysics and neglects classics and mathematics. Another who might have become a statesman

has avoided logic and political economy, being allured by music and plays. The boy has turned away from mathematics to find that in his future study and professional work he absolutely needs them.

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### III.

*Self Government.*—I hold that in a college, as in a country, there should be government; there should be care over the students, with inducements to good conduct, and temptations removed, and restraints on vice. There should be moral teaching; I believe also religious teaching—the rights of conscience being always carefully preserved. But one part of this instruction should be to inculcate independence, independence in thinking, independence in action and self-control. The student should be taught to think for himself, to act for himself. If he does not acquire this spirit, no external authority will be able to guide and restrain him. I abhor the plan of secretly watching students, of peeping through windows at night, and listening through key-holes. Under the *spy* system, the students will always beat their tutors. The tricky fellows will escape, while only the simple will be caught.

But is there, therefore, to be no moral teaching, no restraint on conduct? Are students to be allured away from their homes, hundreds and thousands of miles away, from California, Oregon, and Florida, to our Eastern colleges, and there do as they please—to spend their evenings according to their inclinations, to keep no Sabbaths, and all the while get no advice, no warning from the college authorities? They see a student going into a liquor store, a dancing saloon, a low theatre, a gambling-house. Are they to do nothing? Are they precluded from doing anything?

A student is seen drunk. What are you to do with him? "The law is not made for the righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." Have you no law to reach him? You have no right to discipline him. It is an interference with his freedom. He is a man, and not a boy, and he should resent it. He is able to guide himself. His widowed mother lives a thousand miles away, and cannot reach him. He continues in this course. Are you to allow him to remain in the institution to ruin himself and corrupt others? You answer, we will send him away. But you cannot do so (so I hope) without evidence, and this implies that horrid thing, discipline. But you dismiss him. I have been obliged to dismiss students on rare occasions. It is a terrible ordeal to me. I have sometimes felt more than the student himself. And when the father comes to me, the father trying to suppress the bursting feeling, and the mother in agony which cannot be restrained, I am crushed, I am prostrated. But my creed is, prevention is better than punishment. Surely, if we have the right to dismiss and expel (I never expelled a student), we have the liberty to instruct, to advise, to remonstrate, nay, to discipline. I have some painful scenes to pass through in the government of a college, but I have had more pleasant ones. I have to testify that three-fourths, I believe nine-tenths, of the cases of discipline I have administered have ended in the reformation of the offender. I have been gratified by many fathers and mothers thanking me for saving their sons from ruin. Scores of graduates, when they meet me, have said, "I thank you for that sharp rebuke you gave me; you gave it heartily, and I was irritated at the time, but now I thank you as heartily, for I was arrested thereby when rushing into folly."

It is time that fathers and mothers should know what it is proposed to do with their sons at college. The college

authorities are in no way to interfere with them. They are to teach them Music and Art, and French Plays and Novels, but there is no course in the Scriptures—in their poetry, their morality, their spirituality. The President of Harvard recommends that all colleges should be in great cities. Students are to be placed in the midst of saloons, and gambling-houses, and temples of Venus, but meanwhile no officer of the college is to preach to them, to deal with them. Suppose that under temptation the son falls. I can conceive a father saying to the head of the institution, "I sent my son to you believing that man is made in the image of God, you taught him that he is an upper brute, and he has certainly become so; I sent him to you pure, and last night he was carried to my door drunk. Curse ye this college; 'curse ye bitterly,' for you took no pains to allure him to good, to admonish, to pray for him." I was once addressed by a mother in very nearly these words. I was able to show that her son had come to us a polluted boy from an ungodly school, and that we had dealt with him kindly, warned him solemnly, disciplined him, given notice of his conduct to his mother, and prayed for him. Had I not been able to say this conscientiously I believe I would that day have given in my resignation of the office I hold, and retired to a wilderness to take charge of myself, feeling that I was not competent to take care of others.

It is a serious matter what we are to do to provide religious studies in our colleges. Professor Huxley knows that there is little or nothing in our ordinary school books to mould and form the character of children, and so, as member of the London School Board, he votes for the reading of the Scriptures in the schools, not that he believes them, but because they are fitted to sway the mind,—which I remark they are able to do, because they

are divine. Everybody knows that science alone is not fit to form or guard morality; and Herbert Spencer is very anxious about this transition period, when the old has passed away (so he thinks) and the new morality is not yet published. Emerson stood up manfully for the retention of prayers in Harvard University. Are we now in our colleges to give up preaching? to give up Bible instruction? to give up prayers? But I am on the borders of the religious question, on which I now formally propose that *This club should have another meeting, in which President Eliot will defend the new departure in the religion of colleges, and I engage with God's help to meet him.*<sup>1</sup>

In closing, I have to confess that I regard this new departure with deep anxiety. The scholarship of America is not yet equal to that of Germany or Great Britain. Some of us are anxious to raise it up to the standard of Europe. We are discouraged by this plan of Harvard to allow and encourage its students to take branches in which there is so little to promote high intellectual culture. We know what a galaxy of great men appeared in Harvard an age ago, under the old training. I know that it is keenly discussed, within the college itself, whether there is anything in the present and coming modes of dissipated instruction to rear men of the like intellectual calibres. Has there been of late any great poem, any great scientific discovery, any great history, any great philosophic work, by the young men of Cambridge? I observe that the literary journals, for which our young writers prepare articles, have now fixed their seat in New York rather than Boston.

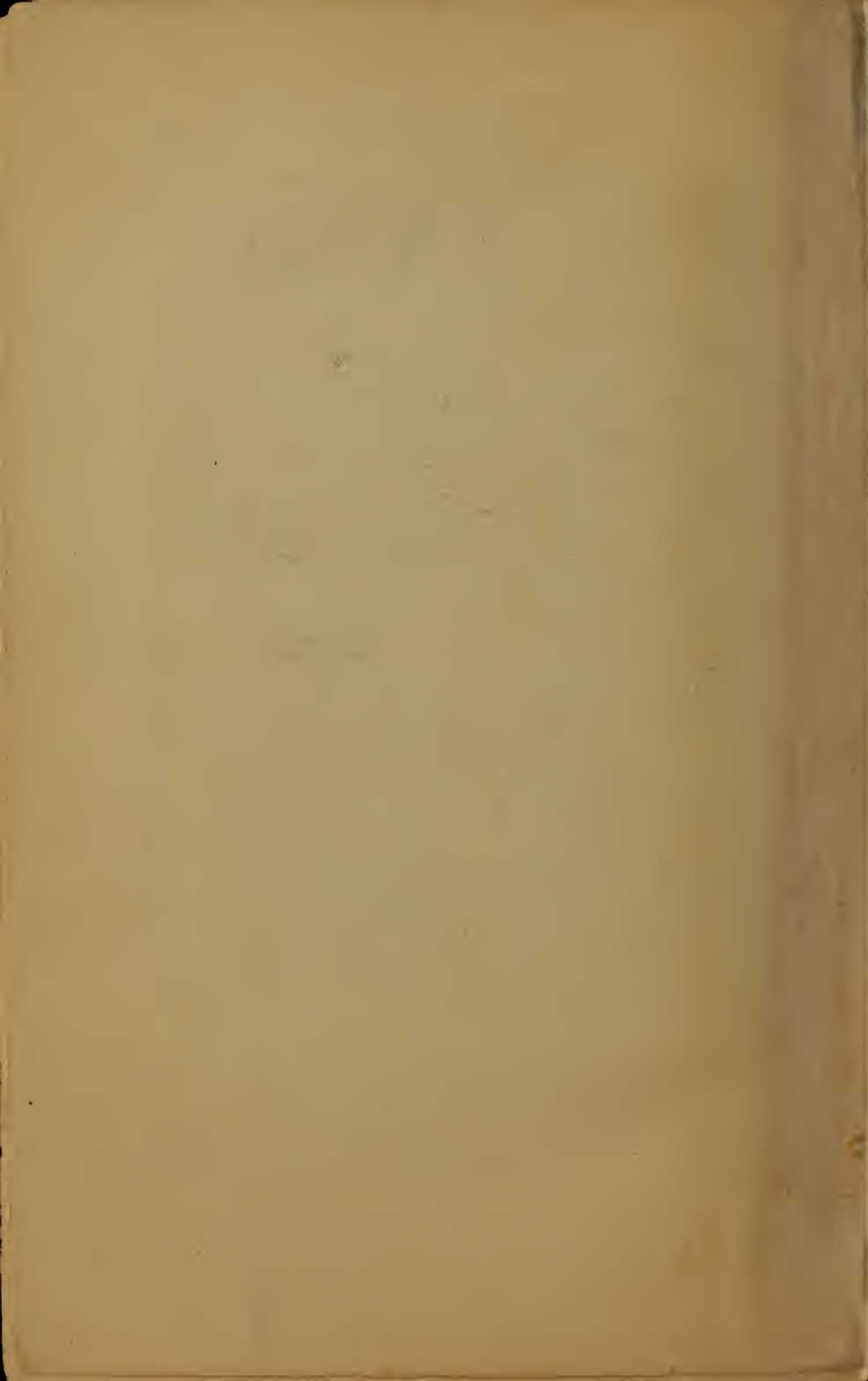
The wise leaders of the new departure do not propose to fight against religion. They do not fight with it, but they are quite willing to let it die out, to die in dignity. They

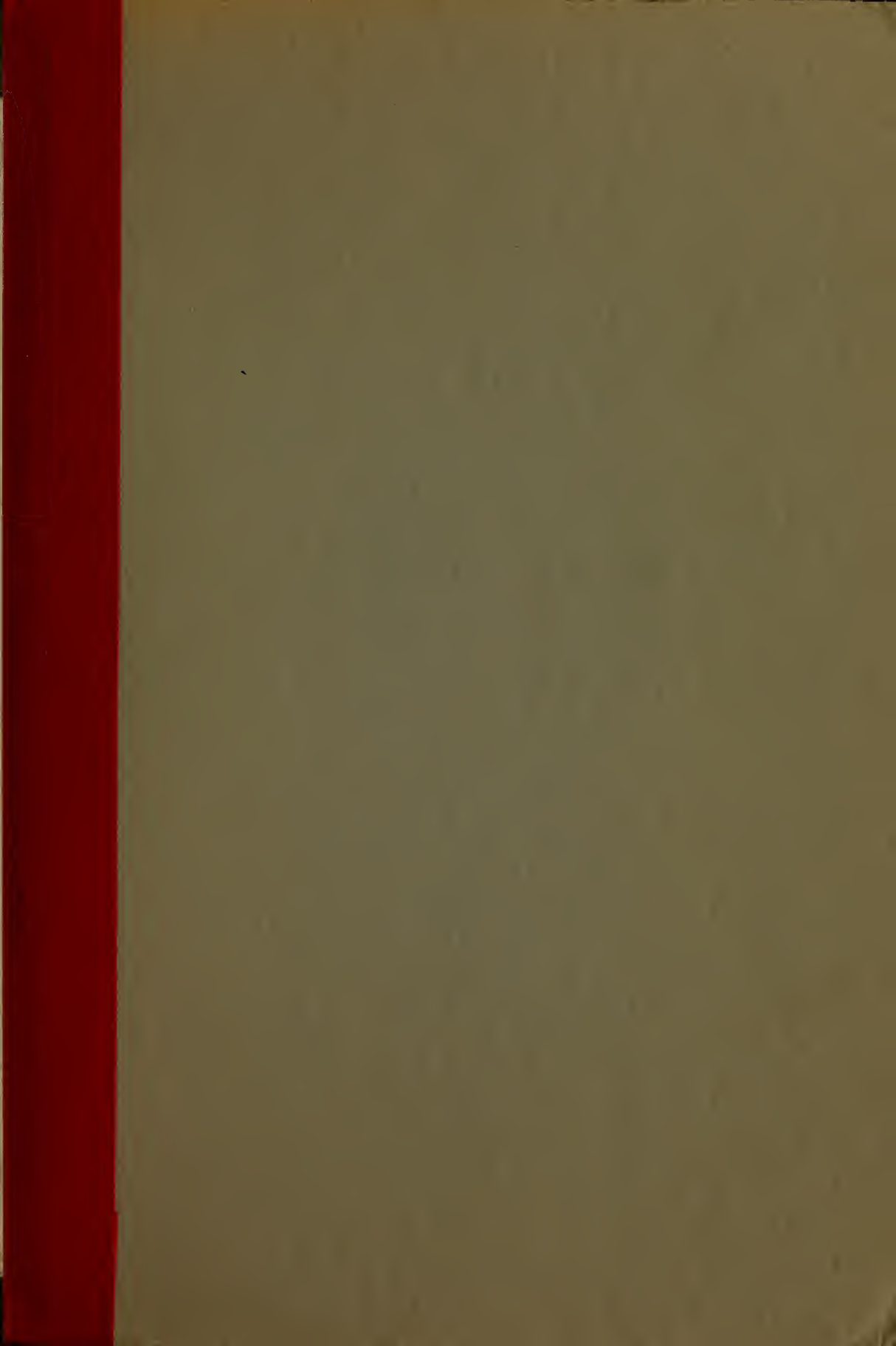
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<sup>1</sup> I am waiting to hear whether this challenge is accepted.



have put severe learning on a sliding scale, not it may be in order to a sudden fall, but insensibly to go down to the level of those boys who do not wish to think deeply or study hard. I am glad things have come to a crisis. Let parents know it, let the churches know it, let all America know it, let scholars in Europe know it, let the world know it—for what is done in Harvard has influence over the world. But some timid people will say, "Tell it not in the lands whence our pious fathers came that the college whose motto is *Pro Christo et Ecclesia* teaches no religion to its pupils. Tell it not in Berlin or Oxford that the once most illustrious university in America no longer requires its graduates to know the most perfect language, the grandest literature, the most elevated thinking of all antiquity. Tell it not in Paris, tell it not in Cambridge in England, tell it not in Dublin, that Cambridge in America does not make mathematics obligatory on its students. Let not Edinburgh and Scotland and the Puritans in England know that a student may pass through the once Puritan College of America without having taken a single class of philosophy or a lesson in religion. But whatever others may do, *I say, I say*, let Europe know in all its universities—I wish my voice could reach them all—that in a distinguished college in America a graduate need no longer take what the ages have esteemed the highest department of learning; and I believe that such an expression of feeling will be called forth, that if we cannot avert the evil in Harvard we may arrest it in the other colleges of the country.





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