

looking for some strict system of thought and conduct, but were soon doomed to disappointment. The mind of M. de Vogüé was too alert, too impatient, to rest long upon one object; it was sufficient for him to glimpse hidden meanings and to attempt to phrase them off-hand into eternal verities; to be forever reaching out towards a larger environment. It was said, with some truth, that he could not write four lines without lapsing into universals. Enthusiasm for his ideas he did at times inspire, especially in the minds of the students who grouped themselves about him, and called him prophet. And indeed, such ideas as his, brilliant in impulse but often inchoate, are just the sort that startle and inspire listening youth, but that make quite a different impression when scrutinized in book form. M. de Vogüé belonged to no school and never succeeded in founding one himself. An exile he has been called, because of the loneliness of his position. He fancied he had seen a great light, yet never could tell quite convincingly what it was.

Of a piece with his general habit of thought were his methods in pure literature—a brilliant, misguided versatility. He was too fluent a preacher to be a novelist. In "Les Morts qui parlent" and in "Le Maître de la mer" the moralizing gives to the stories both their point and direction, turning at the same time the characters into puppets. Undoubtedly, however, he will be remembered for pages here and there, especially for certain descriptions of nature which, like those of his master, Chateaubriand, are written in poetic prose, touched by a tender, quickening symbolism. Whether it be a winter-scene in Russia, the gleam of the Orient, or the "twilight meadows" of France, he shows a caressing touch, a happy buoyancy, an insinuating fancy.

THE SPECIALIZED UNIVERSITY.

Lord Rosebery has recently suggested that the university might solve the increasingly difficult problem of the multiplicity of subjects by what he calls co-operation. Each university, that is, shall leave to the community the vexed question of the relative importance of different studies, and concentrate its efforts frankly on whatever group of subjects it feels itself most qualified to teach. Thus instead of many little trees

of knowledge we shall have one large tree, of which each university (the name can be retained only by courtesy) will be a highly developed branch. It is not meant, of course, that the differentiation should be carried to all possible lengths. It would not be necessary to journey from New York to California, or even from Leeds to Manchester, in order to pass from a course on mineralogy to a course on palæontology. There would be, let us suppose, three great types of university—the classical, the scientific, and the historico-economic. In each of these, subjects not directly related to the particular function of the institution might still be pursued to a certain point; but they would hold a subordinate place without reference to any estimate of their final utility.

Now, this seems at first glance a sufficiently reasonable proposal. We are ready to grant that there would result a large economy of effort, and that each great institution would attain results in its chosen specialty that are now beyond its reach. If the aim of university education were simply and solely to increase the sum of human knowledge, there would be no more to be said. The case would be parallel to that of the industrial world, and we all know what specialization has accomplished there. But to those of us who look to universities not so much for the advancement of knowledge as for the advancement of learning (the distinction is by no means fanciful), the proposed "coöperation" has very much the look of disintegration. To us it seems fully worth while that a considerable amount of efficiency, of measurable attainment, should be sacrificed in order that the catholic temper of university life may be preserved.

Specialization has already been carried very far in the freedom of choice allowed to the individual; but at least the student mind maintains something of the old tradition of a liberal education. No one scholar is in danger of thinking his own particular field of interest a cosmos. There is a constant incitement in the direction of a philosophic attitude toward knowledge. The scientists have a wholesome fear of mere empiricism; the classicists of pedantry; the metaphysicians of sophistry. But if the scheme of specialization among universities were carried out, all this would inevitably be chang-

ed. That fine humility in the face of the vast field of intellectual endeavor which it is one of the great functions of a university to instil, could never be developed under such a system. Every one would know, of course, when he stopped to think about it, that his intellectual vista was only the foreground of a great estate, but his normal habit of mind would be quite unaffected by this consideration. The men produced by the system would be among those of whom Newman wrote, "They see the tapestry of human life, as it were, on the wrong side, and it tells no story."

... Nothing has a drift or relation; nothing has a history or a promise. Everything stands by itself, and comes and goes in its turn, like the shifting scenes of a show, which leaves the spectator where he was."

Above all, if Latin and Greek are to be preserved—and it is largely on the ground that they will thus be saved that Lord Rosebery makes his suggestion—it will not be by isolation. The sciences might appear to prosper by the separation, though they would certainly become cold and hard at heart. But the classics would indeed dry up and wither. They would be preserved—as pressed flowers are preserved—but the free air of the world would no longer be scented with their fragrance. If they are to take anything like their former position, it will be rather from a common reëstimation of their value at the heart of education than from any such artificial separation.

A GREAT FRENCH PHILOSOPHER AT HARVARD.

The Hyde lectureship, which has year after year brought to Harvard some splendid object-lesson of the way in which popular lectures may best be given, has never till this year taken a philosopher as its example-setter. This year we have been having Prof. Emile Boutroux, and the occasion seems to me so well worthy of commemoration that I venture to set down a brief account of it for the *Nation's* readers.

The whole enterprise of international exchange of professors is still in its tentative infancy, and one may hear as many arguments against it as reasons for it. The Hyde foundation requires all lectures to be in the French tongue, and the first thing that has been disclosed is the appalling rarity of ability to understand spoken French, even in a centre of learning like Cambridge. M. Boutroux's auditors this year

should preëminently have been our students of philosophy; but, victims of the deplorable manner in which they have been taught foreign languages, hardly half a dozen of them have shown their faces. Few, even of our instructors, follow a French lecture easily—though many more can follow German—and what with “other engagements,” and the terrors of the title, “Contingence et Liberté,” of M. Boutroux’s course, their number proved so small that the bulk of the audience consisted of world’s people from Boston and elsewhere, including a good number of French visitors attracted, I am sure, less by the particular subject, than by the rare pleasure of hearing any intelligible discourse whatever in the language of the far-off native country.

It is obvious that the institution of professorial exchange needs overhauling. It ought to be a means of vital stimulation, of making our somewhat torpid youth aware of the presence of a wider world about them, human and social as well as intellectual. So far it has missed fire in this respect. Our young fogies in the graduate schools continue working for their Ph.D. examinations by moving, like Faust’s Wagner, “von Buch zu Buch,” “von Blatt zu Blatt,” and remain for the most part quite unconscious that an opportunity has been lost to them.

M. Boutroux is one of the veterans of his country in the sphere of philosophy, and an extraordinarily influential personage in all academic lines of activity. Almost every philosopher of the younger generation has been his pupil; one finds him sitting as a judge at every *soutenance de thèse* for the doctorate in philosophy; he attends congresses; has been since its foundation *directeur* of the Institut Thiers, and is president this year of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, where he will shortly have to welcome Mr. Roosevelt as an *associé étranger*. He is a somewhat ascetic looking figure, with a very French and rather military physiognomy, but with the kindest of manners, a power of extraordinarily clear statement, and, above all, a great air of simplicity and sincerity while lecturing.

M. Boutroux, like almost all his compatriots, thinks it no praise to say of a lecturer that “he talks like a book.” German and Anglo-Saxon lecturers may talk like books, but the idea of a public lecture in France is different. It ought not to furnish information of details as a book does. It ought rather to confine itself to tracing perspectives, defining tendencies, bringing out contrasts, and summing up results. It ought, above all, to generalize and simplify, and it ought to avoid technicality of language. Needless to say that, for this task, complete mastery of the subject is an indispensable condition, and only the great masters have succeeded greatly as

popular expositors. M. Boutroux’s single lectures on Pascal and on Comte showed the breadth and simplicity which result from absolute mastery of a subject.

His continuous course, entitled “Contingence et Liberté,” consisted of eight lectures, and the high originality of his position here is what, in my eyes, entitles his visit to notice beyond the immediate circle of his listeners. M. Boutroux is, by virtue of priority, the leader *de jure* of the reaction against the abstract, and in favor of the concrete point of view in philosophy, which in the last few years has got under full headway in all countries. The leader *de jure*, I say, meaning the historic leader or precursor, for the leadership in loudness has passed in England and this country to more strident voices, and in France to those more radically revolutionary in tone. Boutroux is above all a liberal, grants cheerfully to the opposing side what it can fairly claim, harbors no enmities, and makes no enemies, so that many a convert to “pragmatism” or to “Bergsonism” has remained ignorant that the ball was set rolling by his first publication, “*La Contingence des lois de la nature*,” away back in 1867. His freedom from polemic virulence, his indisposition to flourish a party flag, have kept his name more in the shade than has been just. The most important features of “pragmatism” and “Bergsonism” find clear expression in that early work. And the *Weltanschauung* of that work, matured and reinforced, but in no wise altered, was what this course of lectures reaffirmed. Deemed paradoxical when it first appeared, that *Weltanschauung* is now recognized as possibly discussable, to say the very least, and is evidently about to enter on a powerful career.

I can only sketch the essence of it briefly, without following the lecturer’s own order, or going into any detail. The quickest way to get at the character of anything is to know what to contrast it with. The best term with which to contrast M. Boutroux’s way of looking at the world is the “scholastic” way of taking it. When I say “scholastic,” I don’t use the word historically, but as common-sense uses it when it makes of it a reproach. In this sense scholasticism is found in science as well as in philosophy. It means the prétension to conceive things so vigorously that your definitions shall contain all that need be known about their objects. It means the belief that there is but one set of thoughts which absolutely tell the truth about reality, and it means the claim to possess those thoughts, or the more essential part of them. If the word “scholastic” be objected to, let the word “classic” be employed. M. Boutroux’s bugbear would then be the classic spirit, and he might be treated as a “romantic” in philosophy.

H. Taine has attributed the misfortunes of France in the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods to the rule of the classic spirit, with its trust in immutable principles and rigorously logical applications; but Taine himself, so far as his general view of man and nature went, cherished classic ideals. If we look back to his time, we find a different idea of the meaning of “Science” from that which the best investigators have now come to believe in. Taine, Berthelot, Renan, and the other great influencers of public opinion during the Second Empire, thought of science as an absolute dissipator of the mysteries of nature. It stripped reality naked of disguise, revealed its intimate structure, was destined to found a new morality and to replace religion. Its votaries were to be the high priests of the future, and the destinies of our planet were to be committed to their keeping. John Fiske’s favorite word “de-anthropomorphization” serves as a good summary of this whole way of thinking.

Carried away by the triumphs of chemistry, physics, and mathematics, these men imagined that the frame of things was eternally and literally mechanical, and that truth was reached by abstracting from it everything connected with personality. Personal life is a mere by-product, it was said, and its categories, though we have to live in them practically, have no theoretic validity. At the present day, however, concepts like mass, force, inertia, atom, energy, are themselves regarded rather as symbolic instruments, like coördinates, curves, and the like, for simplifying our map of nature and guiding us through its jungle. But the whole undivided jungle, with our personal life and all, is the reality immediately given; and though it is given only in small bits at a time to any one, yet the whole content and quality of it is more completely real than that of any of those conceptual substitutes.

This was the central thesis of Professor Boutroux’s lectures. Whereas the classic and scholastic tradition is that reality is above all the abstracted, simplified, and reduced, the inalterable and self-identical, the fatal and eternal, Boutroux took the diametrically opposite view. It is the element we wholly live in, it is what Plutarch’s and Shakespeare’s pages give us, it is the superabounding, growing, ever-varying and novelty-producing. Its real shape is biography and history, and its “categories,” far from sterilizing our world for all purposes of living reason, keep fertilizing it infinitely. “Reason” is a term which Professor Boutroux rescues from its purely classic use of tracing identities, concealed or patent. It is for him the faculty of judgment in its widest sense, using sentiments and willingsnesses, as well as concepts, as its