

THE LANCET.

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The Progress of the University of Cambridge.

ON Tuesday last His Majesty the KING, who was accompanied by the QUEEN and Princess VICTORIA, visited and declared open the new buildings which have been recently erected at Cambridge for the better accommodation and further development of the faculties of medicine, botany, geology, and law in the University. These buildings, a detailed and illustrated account of which we were able to place before our readers last week, may be regarded as the practical outcome of a movement which first took a definite shape six years ago in the form of a public communication from the Duke of DEVONSHIRE, the Chancellor of the University, in respect of the pecuniary condition and requirements of the famous seat of learning of which he is the official head. This communication must, we think, have caused a shock to the mind of a large section of our population, inasmuch as it made clear by the help of a close financial statement the deplorable fact that the University, instead of possessing the wealth indicated by its history, possessions, and associations, was sorely in need of money. The Duke of DEVONSHIRE said to the world, as resident workers at the University had been saying to each other for ten years in the various common rooms, that the resources of Cambridge were scanty and that there was no immediate prospect of their increase, while the work before it, if it was to be discharged in the future in the spirit and manner of a glorious past, must of necessity entail enormous expenditure. The revenues were falling as the expenses were rising. The financial statement showed that the endowments of the University were small and that the payments due to "The Chest" from the different colleges had been sadly lowered owing to the falling off through agricultural depression of the incomes of the colleges, so that at a time when the advance of knowledge, especially the advance of scientific knowledge, formed a conspicuous feature of the age, the University was left without any money to provide proper equipment and teaching facilities for scientific study. Buildings were needed of all sorts—laboratories, lecture rooms, examination rooms, libraries, museums, and offices. Teaching—and splendid teaching, too—as will be admitted by all who remember the work done by Cambridge physiologists, for example—was provided, but an amount of gratuitous work was being done by the lecturers that the University ought not to have expected from them. Endowment was wanted for professorships, lectureships, and readerships a fact which had indeed been admitted 15 years previously by a Royal Commission. All these things appeared plainly from the Duke of DEVONSHIRE'S communication and its accompanying financial statement, and

the immediate and practical outcome was the formation of the Cambridge University Association, with the design to carry out by corporate action on the part of Cambridge graduates the objects indicated by the Chancellor as being more immediately urgent. The association met with fair support. It has collected over £70,000, which is a large sum of money even though the constituency to which appeal was made comprises a good proportion of the upper classes of the nation. If not a large yet a substantial fraction of the sum of money urgently needed has been subscribed. A few donors have been very generous, some money has been obtained, much credit has probably been given, and the four beautiful buildings, with their complete equipments for the scientific and technical work of their respective departments, have risen in the centre of the university town. This brief history of previous events explains the true significance of the visit of the KING and QUEEN to Cambridge this week. We have not here merely the monarch graciously opening new premises for worthy objects. The inauguration of the new Cambridge schools means more. It is the public sign that a practical re-endowment of the University of Cambridge, such as the Chancellor of the University showed to be inevitable six years ago, has commenced. His Majesty, in declaring these buildings open for their work, does so not only as the KING assisting in a movement of educational importance to the country but as a Trinity man, the father of a Trinity man, and the son of Queen VICTORIA, herself the first patron of the Cambridge University Association, and of Prince ALBERT, a late Chancellor of the University.

The depressing situation in the University of Cambridge, as revealed to light by the candid revelations of its Chancellor, appears to indicate considerable material neglect of the University when we remember the victorious progress of American institutions and the development of certain of our own provincial centres of education. Let us take, for example, the University of Liverpool. University College, Liverpool, has received from Liverpool £400,000, or thereabouts, during its comparatively short life, while only a fortnight ago we chronicled an event that appears to point to a promise of annual municipal support. At a monthly meeting of the Liverpool city council held on Feb. 3rd it was unanimously agreed to place £10,000 at the disposal of University College, Liverpool, as a contribution towards the expenses of the year, and there is little doubt that the precedent of assistance thus created will be followed. This is the gratifying kind of event that may be expected to happen at Manchester, Leeds, or Birmingham and the reason for such civic generosity leaps to the eyes. The people of England are now awake to the paramount necessity of good technical education if this country is to hold its own, especially against American and German competition; they can appreciate at last the benefits of a university rising in their midst. Germany and to some extent Scotland have long known the value of the local university where prohibitive prices for residential accommodation do not preclude the average citizen from obtaining the educational benefits which all allow are now his due. But there is some danger lest in the recognition of the good to be obtained from a multiplication

of well-endowed universities we should become blind to the splendid services rendered to this country by Oxford and by Cambridge. We must not be taken in anything that follows as belittling the newer institutions in order to exalt the older, for to do so would be a patent error, inasmuch as a large percentage of the distinguished professors, teachers, lecturers, and readers at the younger seats obtained their training and their degrees at Oxford or Cambridge. Much that is good in the local universities springs from the fact that they are local and are able to draw their revenue from the neighbourhood by proving that their work is essential to the well-being of the neighbourhood. But the very best features that they display are animated by the all-permeating spirit of Oxford and Cambridge. This is the point that seems to us to have escaped the public ken, otherwise we do not know how to explain the fact that the University of Cambridge stands in need of money. To some extent the late CECIL RHODES by his magnificent bequests to Oxford has placed the sister university in a better pecuniary position to carry on the historic work, but even CECIL RHODES by the terms of his will showed his belief that the University was in danger of senility. And now we have come to the real point. What has militated against Oxford and Cambridge in the public mind is the belief that they are mediæval survivals, supplying upon an obsolete model education which, for all purposes in future life, makes a man gracefully unfit to earn his bread and butter. How this idea arose is another story and we are not prepared to say that there has never been a time when it could not be justified in part, but it is an extraordinary fact that the idea is held now by people who, if they would stop to think, would find that not only their bishop, their banker, and the Member of Parliament who represents them are from Oxford or from Cambridge, but that their medical officer of health, their solicitor, and the man who installed their electric light, possess the same hall-mark. Why in the face of these facts, and in view of the demands made upon Oxford and Cambridge for teachers the notion should exist that the elder universities provide only facilities for the cultivation of decorative ineptitude we cannot imagine; but we take it that the action of the Cambridge University Association, as endorsed on Tuesday last by the KING, will open the minds of the public to the truth. Oxford and Cambridge to-day are very much alive and discharge their natural functions with vigour and success despite adverse circumstances, while for the most part these adverse circumstances have not been of their creation.

Moreover, it must be remembered that at Cambridge, the university with which we are to-day immediately concerned, progress has come from within. The University has received almost no money from the public in order that it might better fit itself to meet the public needs. What the great manufacturing populations have done, and are doing, for their seats of learning has been done hardly at all for Cambridge, while the recent movement for re-endowment is entirely self-started. Spontaneously the heads of the Colleges and the influential professors met together some six years ago and came to certain conclusions with regard to the existing condition of affairs. These conclusions formed the gist of the statement which the Chancellor of the University gave to the public

with his declaration of the poverty of the University. We have heard that when it was proposed that the famous Senate House at Cambridge should be lighted by means of electricity a newspaper declared that this could only be accomplished "by the hanging of 12 *pedants!*" Was the printer careless or did he share the warped view of the public with regard to the apathy of the Cambridge don? From beginning to end the great movement towards re-endowment in Cambridge has been due to the action of the University, of its leaders in thought who are in residence, and of its graduates who fill busy posts in many places and many countries. This seems to us to form an enormous argument in favour of the public coming to the aid of the University. Providence helps those who help themselves, says the proverb, and surely a millionaire can frame himself upon no better model than Providence. The bravery with which the University of Cambridge has faced serious financial problems and plunged into pecuniary debt that it might discharge its moral debt to the youth of the country seems to us to deserve immediate recognition. It cannot beg save from its alumni and it cannot advertise. We trust that the gracious act of the SOVEREIGN in making a personal visit to Cambridge will bring the needs of the University to the notice of some who can help in ministering to them.

Dispensing by Medical Men.

THE proposed addition to the suggested Medical Acts Amendment Bill of clauses to prohibit registered practitioners, with certain exceptions, from dispensing or supplying drugs or other medicaments has been discussed at a meeting of the Central Division of the Metropolitan Counties Branch of the British Medical Association and the proposal has been rejected. When the notice convening the meeting was first brought to our attention we ventured to point out that it was impossible to conceive that the General Medical Council could ever devote time to the investigation of the claims for exemption. It will be remembered that it was proposed that a practitioner, under heavy penalties, should have to satisfy the General Medical Council that he practised in a district unable to support both a medical man and a druggist. This consideration, among others, no doubt prevailed with the meeting in its refusal to adopt the prohibition clauses.

For the present the matter is at an end but it is impossible to withhold a certain degree of sympathy from the proposal, if it could have been put forward in a less uncompromising form. There can be little doubt that the present practice is irksome and that dispensing entails an unsatisfactory form of labour when the busy practitioner has come in from a long round. It is not possible in very many cases for the practice to support an assistant or dispenser and the result in such poor districts is that the medical man must himself stand about in his surgery dispensing medicines which have to be sent or called for, when, if only in the interests of his patients, he ought to be resting from his labours. While most of our correspondents fully concede this point, many have urged that they have purchased a dispensing practice, that their outlay has included the expense of the surgery, and that they are entitled to obtain some return upon