

way of London possessing the educational advantages of a German University town.

I venture to offer some facts and considerations which may modify this view, and perhaps aid in forming a juster conception of the real nature of the University question than is commonly entertained.

Much more important matters are involved in the question than the maintenance or extension of existing institutions, though these are quite legitimate subjects of discussion and defence; and in the columns of NATURE it is only upon the broad ground of the advancement of science and learning that the question can be dealt with.

The epithet "Imperial" is intended to imply some unfitness on the part of the present University for other than "Imperial" functions, whatever these may be. But the University has not, and never has had, the least claim to any such title. It has never at any time held colonial examinations of its own motion. It has never at any time held any colonial examinations whatever in the faculty of science, or in the faculty of medicine, or for honours in any faculty, or for any of the higher degrees. What examinations it holds in any colony are held only at the request of the Governor of the colony, transmitted through the Colonial Office, and are practically confined to matriculation and the intermediate examination in arts. Occasionally, but very rarely, an examination in laws or for the Bachelor of Arts is held in some colony. In 1890, 16 candidates matriculated in the colonies, and 5 passed the intermediate examination in arts out of a total of some 5000 candidates. Not a single degree examination was held in any colony. In fact, these colonial examinations, which, few as they are, yearly diminish in number, never formed part of the University scheme. They were instituted about 1864 at the request of the colony of Mauritius, but were extended and have been maintained chiefly to facilitate the award of the scholarships at the disposal of the Gilchrist Trustees. Not only is the University of London not an Imperial University, but it is even less British in character than probably either of the older Universities. Very few of its candidates come from Scotland, fewer still from Ireland, and my strong impression is that the great majority come from midland and southern England. I should not be surprised even to find that a considerable majority are now drawn from an area having London for its centre with a radius of not more than 100 miles. The probable establishment, at no very remote period, of provincial Universities will practically give a still more exclusive sense to the name University of London.

It may next be asked what precisely is meant by a "teaching University in and for London," the creation of which is constantly put forward as the principal educational need of the metropolis. Is the proposed University to be "for" London in some sense in which the University of Oxford is not "for" Oxford, or that of Edinburgh not "for" Edinburgh? I know of no University, British or German, which is "for" the particular town or district in which it has its local habitation. Or is the proposed University to be "for" London in some sense in which the existing University is not "for" London as well as the rest of the country? The words seem mere surplusage, unless intended to impose local limitations which no University has ever yet imposed upon itself.

The expression "teaching University," too, stands in need of exacter definition. The University of Edinburgh is a teaching University, so is that of Dublin, so are the German Universities. Oxford and Cambridge are only in part teaching Universities; the greater part of the teaching is done by the Colleges. The Victoria University is not, in fact, a teaching University at all; the teaching is the work of its Colleges, and the proposed "teaching University in and for London" would, as far as actual teaching is concerned, resemble the Victoria University rather than a Scotch or German University. At this point the *crux* of the whole question reveals itself. The really distinguishing feature of the new University as contrasted with the University of London would be the examination of collegiate candidates (and those only) by their teachers in alleged conformity with the principle that examination should follow teaching. But it may be admitted that teaching ought to be adapted to examination, or examination to teaching, without admitting any advantage in the system of teachers settling the examination of their own students, collegiate or not. The combined teacher-examiner system is not wholly trusted by its supporters. At the older Universities the examiners are by no

means usually the teachers of the candidates; at the Victoria University one of the examiners is always an "external" one. I am not quite sure how the matter stands at the Scotch and Irish Universities. To assert that such partial or semi-partial modes of testing knowledge are superior to disinterested and independent methods is merely to make an assumption, announce an opinion. What comparison of the working of both systems proves any superiority on the part of the first-mentioned of them? Do the pass degrees of Scotch or Irish Universities, or even of Oxford or Cambridge, stand higher than those of London?

Further, is it not misleading to characterize the University of London as a mere Examining Board? Of the three functions of such a teaching University as that of Edinburgh, it performs two. It directs teaching by syllabuses and regulations (prepared with extreme care, and not without ample reference to the best authorities on all matters of special knowledge), and it tests teaching by absolutely impartial and disinterested examinations, but it does not—without space, funds, and appliances it could not—pretend to teach. Nothing, however, in its nature or essence forbids its development, alone or in union or conjunction with other institutions, into what would be an ideal University of the non-residential order, neither coercive nor exclusive—one that should offer proper University instruction to all comers, and, at the same time, confer degrees upon open examinations independently (save for obvious reasons in relation to medical degrees) of place or mode of instruction.

The part the existing University of London has played in the advancement of learning may be indicated by the fact mentioned by the Vice-Chancellor in his Presentation speech, that during the last thirty years—that is, since its examinations were thrown open—the number of degrees conferred by the University has increased tenfold. This, however, is only one of the ways in which its influence is shown; the great advance in scientific education the last fifty years have witnessed is almost wholly due to the stimulus and example of the University of London. But the subject is too large a one to be dealt with on the present occasion, and indeed, from its nature, scarcely lends itself to treatment capable of doing full justice to the University.

The work of a University should not be confined to the education of graduates. Its crowning function is the exposition and illustration of the higher learning along the whole line of advance. Such is the task so admirably accomplished by the Sorbonne and the Collège de France, and to the world of science and learning in London the University of London is peculiarly well adapted, by its independence and impartiality, to render similar services. Some years ago an attempt was made to work out a scheme having this end in view, but, in deference to reasons that no longer exist, it was found necessary to abandon its further prosecution. Its resumption has now become, or may shortly become, simply a question of means, and the time is at hand when a strong effort ought to be made to afford scholars and men of science in London some of the advantages their brethren have so long enjoyed in Paris.

Richmond, May 19.

F. VICTOR DICKINS.

Co-adaptation.

WRITTEN letters remain. It is for anyone who may read this correspondence through at one time to judge on which side lie the "valid" distinctions, and on which the "invalid" confusions—not to mention comparisons in respect of "verbiage" or mere personalities. But I am obliged to write once more to insist, for the fourth time, that my agreement with Prof. Meldola does *not* extend to the "conclusion as to the non-existence of co-adaptation," but only to stating that co-adaptation must be proved not to exist, if "Mr. Spencer's argument" is to be logically met. And if, as Prof. Meldola now says, any such statement is to be found in his "review of Mr. Pascoe's book" (which, I repeat, merely reproduces "Mr. Wallace's argument" as to the *accumulation of adaptations*, without remarking that this has no relevancy to the argument from *co-adaptation*), it must be in that "language of their own" which the neo-Darwinians find "to be intelligible among themselves."

Christ Church, Oxford, May 15.

GEORGE J. ROMANES.

A priori Reasoning.

I SEEM to have failed to make my contention clear to Mr. Cockerell, and will try once more. What I maintain is this: