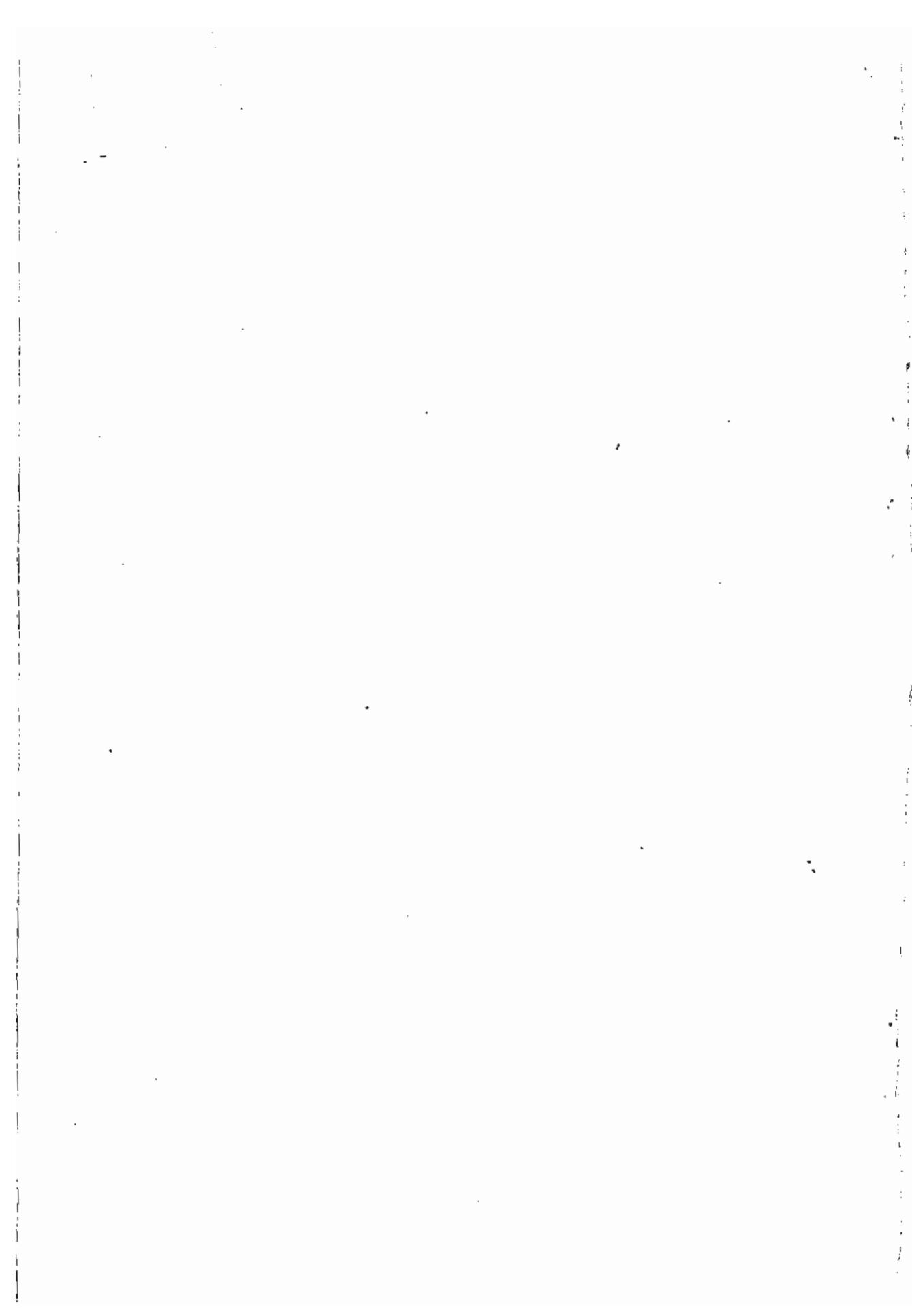


*Universities*  
*and*  
*University Cities in Europe*

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# University and University Cities of Europe

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The Dark Age following the decline of the Roman Empire in Europe led men to gild the memory of what was, in comparison, a reign of law. During that Dark Age in the west the chiefs of the Christian Clergy of the Roman Cities, called *Episcopi* (in English, Bishops) were sometimes almost the only persons of any education left. They and the church developed prestige which was specially great in the case of the bishop of the old imperial city of Rome. After the fifth century he had no emperor in Rome to rival him and he extended his spiritual jurisdiction wherever Christian teachers penetrated in western Europe. His relation to the old jurisdiction became restricted with some modifications of frontier, to what had been the Roman Empire in the west. He lost England and north Switzerland which had been within the Empire and retained a large part of Ireland which was outside the Empire as well as Hungary, Bohemia, Slovakia & Poland. His influence was, however, immensely strong in southwest Europe, in which Roman assimilation had gone so far as to make the vernacular languages daughters of Latin. Pilgrimages to Rome became an important social feature, «the city» its ecclesiastics were busy with them and with the government of the spiritual life of western Christendom.

When the revival began after the Dark Age we hear of medical studies at Salerno in South Italy and it has been asked, but not decided finally whether we have there a survival from Greek days centuries before or an importation from Islamic Africa of some ideas surviving in North Africa from Greek tradition. Salerno certainly became famous in the second half of the eleventh century, but it died away later on as a centre of study and is not usually classed as having been a University. The revival brought a re-growth of cities, and it more or less coincided in time with an effort of the church to enforce the rule of celibacy on its parish priests (secular clergy) as well as its monks (regular clergy). So, on the one hand, there was need to think of law in connection with the growing complexity of intercourse and exchange, and, on the other hand, priests must henceforth be recruited from the people in each generation and there must be study of the law of the church and of its doctrines and ritual. It had come to be thought that doctrine and ritual must be uniform in all regions under the Pope's jurisdiction, allowing for a minimum of compromises with pre-Christian practices and belief in various localities. The use of Latin in the ritual and general government

of the Church helped to maintain uniformity as well as to make Latin the language of education generally for centuries.

The road to Rome for men of western and northwestern and central Europe lay through north Italy when intercourse and towns were growing. Groups of guilds of students in various north Italian towns sought teachers of Latin, law and Theology if they could get sufficient protection from the local ruler. The beginning of privilege makes a complex story. But it is generally agreed that Bologna, the place when all roads meet to go through the Apennine pass on the way to Rome, became an important centre of studies. The university there dated its foundation 1110. Much student activity was going on there before that time. At what stage in the growth of organization the name university becomes appropriate is a question to which there is no answer. Some students of university history would give a date after the middle of the 12th century making Bologna, in this respect little older than Paris if indeed as old. We may take it as the senior centre of studies of law (civil law and canon law) and theology, to which were soon added medicine and philosophy.

Padua probably owes its foundation as a university to a group of students migrating from Bologna. It prospered partly because it was a place where roads met & whence lay the way south across the lower Adige and Po to Bologna and Rome. The roads which met included that across the Alps via the Brenner, concerned with Venetian traffic, and that which came from northeast Venetia and lands beyond. Also, Padua was on the mainland opposite Venice.

Pavia claims an extreme antiquity for itself as a centre of studies. Formally it became a university in 1361 and prospered. It again is at a meeting of roads from west and north, with the way onward to Bologna along the Via Emilia.

In the early Italian centres of study, of which 3 have been mentioned because they are still important as universities, the attitude of mind was that of accepting a venerable tradition in religion, law and medicine as authoritative, of commenting on it but not yet of observing and experimenting to discover new truth.

It is an important fact that centres of study did not develop in the growing cities of commerce, Venice, Genoa, Milan, Florence and others. The peoples of these cities used a part of their wealth in encouraging the fine arts. — painting, sculpture, architecture, fine metal work and so on. These activities gave scope for initiative and experiment which might be repressed among university students with their eyes fixed on an authoritative past. The fine arts were a line of escape in Europe though subjects of pictures were limited for a long time by the authoritarian tradition. In the Dark Ages prejudice on both Islamic and Christian sides had limited intercourse, a prejudice less strong among the people of Venice, who did not look back to a Roman past, but were the descendants of fisherfolk who had found a home and refuge among the islets of the famous lagoon. Venice was ready to take opportunities of trade anywhere, profited greatly thereby. On the Islamic side the Dark Age was shorter, despite the crudity shown in destroying the

library of Alexandria. The cloister as an architectural and social feature was taken over by the Islam from early Christianity in southwest Asia and Egypt was greatly developed at IBN TULUN (868 A.D.), Cairo. Probably Islam may have a share in handing on this idea to western Europe. Silk had come from China to the Eastern Roman Empire and so it reached Islam which took the industry to Sicily, thence it spread to Milan which was situated in a region suited to growing the mulberry for silkworm food. Ideas of pottery again from China were adopted and developed in early Islam Persia and passed on to North Africa and Andalusia, from which last the idea of glazing pottery reached western Europe as its revival preceded. Dark Age pottery in Europe was poor. Elements of Greek medicine and mathematics were also passed on from Islam to Christian Europe. But the Islamic world fell into misfortune in the cultural sense just about the time that, on the Christian side, initiative and experiment were finding scope in the fine arts. The Mamluks were oppressing Egypt. Mongolian peoples were oppressing Southwest Asia and neither group was intended in fine arts or popular initiative.

In university matters on both sides the tradition was authoritarian not enquiring.

EL AZHAR (founded 988) was concerned with the Islamic. Bologna (1110?) with the Roman and Christian heritages. EL AZHAR has stood above all other centres in Islam though, CORDOBA was a place of study frequented by Christians as well as Muslims for a while. On the Christian side a number of centres of study sprang up, and thanks to the common use of Latin, scholar might go from one to another, but if he deviated from orthodox beliefs he would be subject to persecution everywhere. The analogy with what happens under authoritarian attitude was so little mitigated at the universities in spite of the fact that southern one, like Bologna, began as student guilds. One must realise that studies were concerned with precious manuscripts and that the copies were often made by monks who became their custodians, a probable restrictive factor. The importance of widespread contacts for the prosperity of a centre of university studies in the middle Ages is one of the points illustrated by the universities of Bologna, Pavia and Padua. At Bologna the colleges for students' residence were an important feature and the name of the Spanish College then has lasted to the modern times. EL AZHAR also emphasised residence, but nowhere has so much importance been continuously attached to this as at Oxford and Cambridge where halls, often at first private venture, were taken over by the university authorities and in all but a few cases sooner or later transformed into colleges with experienced scholars in control. Several universities or study centres were begun in Christian Spain, but few did very much except Salamanca, a university from 1243. This is mentioned here because it again illustrates the idea of wide contacts. The city is near the north east (Christian) end of a lowland way through the middle Sierras. So the south of these Sierras is what have become New Castile and Estremadura, provinces fought over and devastated on the wars between Islam and Christianity, and in any case rather arid and scarcely peopled. So Salamanca was decidedly on the

Christian side, yet not without Islamic contacts. Perhaps it is relevant here to repeat the story that Christopher Columbus found support for his heterodox plans from the university of Salamanca which was interested in mathematics. It is interesting that it was Salamanca and not Toledo that had the historic university. Toledo, at a Tagus crossing south of the middle Sierras, was an outpost of one side or the other in the long wars, and became the ecclesiastical metropolis of Roman Catholic Spain when the Islamic power declined. Madrid was created after Spain was united under one crown in the 15th. century, so does not enter into the early story of study centres. Paris, Prague, 1348 Cracow, 1364 Vienna, 1365 and Heidelberg, 1385 and other universities are instances of another idea. Paris began in the twelfth century, the others in the 14th. Paris illustrates a closely linked system of royal and ecclesiastical authority finding mutual help in stiff struggle to maintain and extend authority. Paris is an almost uniquely rich cross roads, a focus of authority not a city «on the way» between one cultural region and another. Its university began to develop colleges for residence, but this did not attain much success though the name of one of them, La Sorbonne, is often used to designate the university as a study centre. Prague, Cracow, Vienna, Heidelberg were all princely centres, again foci rather than palces on the way to some other centre. Cracow and Prague in a sense also illustrate the idea of culture contacts that has been discussed above. Prague has the Palace fortress of the Hradcany with the cathedral within it. A commercial city with a German infusion developed across the river and in it there grew the university. Cracow, again has its palace fortress and cathedral on the Wawel hill, and like Prague it developed a commercial city with a German infusion and, again, in it there grew a university. Vienna is of course one of the great cross roads of Europe, at the gate between steppe and forest, at the southwestern end of the Moravian gap, fated to be a vital forepost in the struggles between Europe and the Turks and therefore an imperial city with a university as a rallying point for western Christianity in the long fight.

Oxford and Cambridge are like Paris and others in that they were from the start universities of teachers gathering students around them, not student guilds finding and employing teachers. But they are like the old universities of north Italy in that they are stations «on the way» between different regions, but regions less different from one another than was the case as for example, Bologna and Salamanca. The dates of foundation at Oxford and Cambridge are very indefinite but something was in active working before the year 1200. Oxford on the way from the English Midlands to the South Country of Chalk Hills with its pilgrims way to Canterbury, it is also on the way from the sheep - and - wool country of the Costwolds to the great market of London. On its High Street the church of St. Mary the Virgin has a northern porch which is said to have been the first place in which univetsity teaching was given. Outside the City Wall the fairground with the church of St. Giles, patron of itinerant vedors, illustrates the gathering of men at this centre. Cambridge, likewise, is «on the way», indeed on a sort of isthmus between area on the south, it communicates between East-

Anglia on the east and the English Midlands on the west. It had the annual Stourbridge Fair, long one of the most important in England.

The King of England might have a residence at each of the two university cities, that at Oxford has disappeared, but the Masters Lodge at Trinity College, Cambridge, is a royal place. But neither city is really a royal centre, and the fact that there were two, and that they were rivals made the development of authoritative pronouncements by either much less feasible than it was at Paris with its combination of royal and ecclesiastical backing.

It is noteworthy that in Germany, as in North Italy, early university did not develop in the commercial cities of that period. The Hanse towns did not have universities in the Middle Ages. Indeed universities developed rather late in Germany, Heidelberg being the senior one dating from 1385, nearly 40 year after Prague, and twenty years after Cracow and Vienna. A specially important case is that of Leipzig (1409), then a city of growing commercial importance at an entry in the tangle of hills and valleys of mid-western Germany.

The capture of Novogorod the Great, the Hanse outpost in Russia, by the growing power of Muscovy disturbed the old established for trade via the Baltic. A land route via Poznan and Leipzig Fair became a European event. Business made Leipzig an important centre for legal decisions as much as that even the Bismarkian German Empire maintained its Supreme Court of Judicature at Leipzig. Further, as the university was developing in the late 15th century the art of printing was spreading, and after a while Leipzig became famous for printing and publishing, especially in the 19th century. Basel is an interesting and important case, in some ways a forerunner of the modern civil university. Old established burgher families are a great feature at Basel and the university is largely their « Child ». The city is on the margin between French and German, and between Romanist and Protestant regions with a leaning towards the Germanic and the Protestant side, but a wide outlook that helped to make it, for some years, the home of Erasmus.

The Roman Church founded the university of Toulouse in the thirteenth century as part of its policy, in cooperation with the king of France, to repress the independent thought of the people of the south who came to be known as Albigenses. In the 15th century the university of Louvain in Belgium was founded with intent to defend the doctrine of the church against growing criticism.

In Scotland, also, the church was concerned with the foundation of the universities. Roads were few and poor and communications were chiefly via coastal waters. St. Andrews the archbishopric of the east coast developed university in the 14th century. Glasgow, the archbishopric of the west coast, followed with a university founded in the mid fifteenth century.

Aberdeen founded a supplementary university (for a time) for the northern part of the east coast towards the end of the 15th century. Edinburgh nearly a century younger, is not a royal creation though it is in a capital, the Protestant Presbyterian Church of Scotland has more claim

to the paternity. For the 16th century, the spread of Greek learning and of printed books and the ecclesiastical quarrels which led to the retreat of the Pope of Rome more or less behind the frontiers of the old Roman Empire, with some deviations, are both widely recognised as highly significant. A third change, even more fundamental, is often insufficiently even wrongly, considered. Copernicus, Christopher Columbus, Leonardo da Vinci, Vesalius, Conrad Gessner and Galileo, to name only a few investigators, made enquiry and experiment, observation and inference, hypothesis and criticism a part of equipment of learning. Consciously or unconsciously they brought forward the idea of truth as a goal towards which we strike, the implication is that theories and beliefs are provisional and subject to adjustment, that we know in parts.

Though Newton was for some years a Professor at Cambridge, the new movement grew to a large extent outside the universities. In England it was fostered by the Royal Society of London founded in 1662 after a period of gestation at Oxford, the Society was said to be concerned to increase «natural knowledge» and so the movement under review is often spoken of as growth of natural science.

This is inadequate. The idea of the search for truth led men to try to treat history philosophically. Montesquieu wrote *l'Esprit des Loix*, strangely reminiscent in parts of Ibn Khaldun's still more important *Prolegomena* written four centuries before. Gibbon gave a valuable commentary alongside of his chronicle of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. The effort to reach truth in history, again at first largely outside the universities, led on to archaeology and triumphs of Brough, de Perthes, Schlieman and many other enlarged our view of the human story. Archbishop Usher's 6000 years became 600,000. Classical Greek life was seen developing from *Ægean Pre-history*. Champollion led the way towards a growing but still very inadequate understanding of ancient Egypt. Charles Darwin made the world seem an ever changing maze of reactions, and Einstein's relativity seems to carry the idea still further. Most of these thinkers worked outside the universities which so often still had their gaze averted from actual life. We should turn aside for a moment from this stream of observation, experiment and calculation to think of the Fine Arts. In the late sixteenth century whale fisheries brought to maritime western Europe blubber from which, with potash, cleaner soap could be made to replace the old kitchen stuff of home fat and wood ash. This cleaner soap made white starched ruffs fashionable. Moreover, in the countries which had become Protestant, the old religious pictures were no longer in vogue, indeed were considered Popish. Painters seized the opportunity to make portraits of magistrates in their ruffs and to show the improved house interiors that skilled craftsmen were making for the merchants of the new time. They also painted landscapes studied for their own sake, now observation of nature had become a recognised activity. Rembrandt, Ruysdael, Vermeer, Hals, de Hoogh and few of the Dutch geniuses of the time. Holland had welcomed refugees and had the reward of possessing Spinoza and force while Descartes in philosophy, Lecuwenhock in biology, Huyghens in Physical Science, and Grotius in International Law, as well as her

glory of artists, but most of this remarkable flowing was outside the universities.

It was the same with music. Italian craftsmen were making new types of instruments in the early 17th century. The Lutheran Church in Germany, unlike the Calvinist in Switzerland and elsewhere, sought to beautify its services, and we get the succession of musical composers that developed through Schutze its culmination, and almost its end, in John Sebastian Bach. The Imperial Court at Vienna also takes up the new musical possibilities later on, and we get the unique succession, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Brahms, Strauss. But as in the Middle Ages, the fine arts are mainly outside the universities. The Faculty of Music in a university is often weak even though its personnel may be very distinguished.

The Industrial Revolution based on coal and steam machinery burst upon the world in the eighteenth century, with England entering first into this dangerous experiment. In England coal was found in many places that until then had only small populations. Machinery was brought to the coal, it was too costly to move bulky material such as coal any further than was necessary. Small towns such as Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham, Glasgow and so on grew apace, with few to take thought of the quality of life within them but many eager to get skill in technical processes. Applied Science developed from the early nineteenth century onwards and brought a flood of inventions, and mechanics. Educational Institutes became Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology. Attempts to understand humanity in this new setting and to infuse something of the old cultural tradition into this new life of huge agglomerates led to the founding of new universities in England, civic universities, of which that of the Renaissance period at Basel may be called a distinguished forerunner. It became indeed, a widely current idea that a city of a certain size, for the sake of its own dignity, should have a university. Medicine, Science, Applied Science are obvious Faculties in these cases then is always a Faculty of Arts but it is often rather weak and overshadowed, in Britain, by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Faculties of law and music are, often, not very strong as yet. The spread of Literacy with the cheapening of paper and printing in the 19th century, added to the establishment of schools for all in several countries, led to a great increase in university students and many universities have been founded or have expanded greatly. The case of Berlin is of special importance from its foundation in 1810 as a new institution at this period, it naturally paid special attention to the search for new truth, while adopting a good deal of the other tradition of commenting on ancient texts. From university development the movement searching for truths went on to the foundation and endowment of Research Institutes, and these sometimes seem as though they might divide themselves off from universities, probably to the detriment of both.

The requirement of religious orthodoxy for membership of university has ultimately vanished, or almost vanished, in the majority of countries. It lingered until 1872 at Oxford and Cambridge, and, as a result, London developed university education free from tests of orthodoxy in the early 19th.

century. Now London has a whole network of institutions in different parts of the capital. The contrast between the 19th. century creation in London and the 12th. century creation in Paris, much changed from its origins, is a dramatic one.

Oxford and Cambridge have maintained through the centuries the idea that students should live together, side by side with more experienced scholars. This gives in each university a number of residential colleges. Some with a special relation to some part of the country Balliol College Oxford to Glasgow, Jesus College Oxford to Wales and so on. Bologna had national colleges for student residence. El Azhar has some residential systems. But the great majority of universities 19th. century gave but little attention to this problem save to some extent in the case of women students. In the 20th. century, halls of residence for men and for women have multiplied and Union Clubs have multiplied also. The Cité Universitaire has been developed at Paris and Brussels and is spreading. It is widely felt that the art of living together and tolerant discussion is a large part of education, and that in a Cité Universitaire or a Hall of Residence, there can be opportunities for cultivating the arts, drama, music, design and so on.

One hope in this way, for an enlarging of the bounds of truth and beauty by bringing the two lines of research nearer to one another without restricting or repressing either.

But it is before and above all the spirit of enquiry, of free enquiry, and expression in tentative and humble not in arrogant and authoritarian fashion that has become the very essence of the university ideal, and that is being attacked and persecuted in certain parts of the world today.

It is but free enquiry and frank discussion, acknowledging the provisional nature of all theories, hypotheses and beliefs, that the stream of truth flows on. As it is not only for the sake of the search for truth that this freedom needs to be cherished and defended, not only because it leads to the most unexpected results, even in the matter of practical applications such as the many that have arisen from work by Gregor Mendel or Ernest Rutherford, but because a faculty, a section, a department in which the spirit of enquiry shines forth is in nine cases out of ten a school in which even undergraduate students at the earliest grades learn how to learn and think for themselves, and so to gain understanding that memorising can never give.

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