

though self-conviction charged it with unmeant rebuke. This was the man whose sister was trembling over his spiritual state!) "Indeed," she went on hotly, "you cannot think what the word means, or never could you hint at Mr. Hurst's being that!"

"Ah! well, I only hope you may be right," returned Miss Jean, slightly abashed, but dragged two ways as clearly as ever weak woman was; "but still, abilities are a great snare" (a parrot lesson as-

surely), "and we know poor Gilbert has abilities enough!"

And thenceforth it became increasingly evident that what had once been so much dreaded was developing into an accomplished fact.

Some—not thing, but—person had come between Miss Hurst and her brother; and Miss Hurst did not fulfil her threat. She did not hate this person!

END OF CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

THE EXTENSION OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR STUART, M.P.

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.



THE Chairman of the London Joint Board for the Extension of University Education is not, in the least, one's ideal of a professor. Mr. Stuart's eminent scientific attainments have not sicklied his face with the pale cast of thought; and he would strike the casual observer as likely to be

more at home in the hunting-field or the stubbles than in the lecture-room. He is of that broad-shouldered, thick-set build, more frequently seen in the hard user of muscles and sinews than in the industrious brain-worker. I found him one morning in his drawing-room in Sloane Street, immersed in blue books and Parliamentary papers, by his side a pile of documents relating to the progress of University Extension, which he had most courteously collected for my information. As in some measure the founder of the scheme which in the course of fifteen years has grown to such considerable dimensions, Mr. Stuart naturally takes a vivid interest in its progress; and it is obviously a pleasure to him to talk over its success and its prospects. His acquaintance with the working of the system is, like the younger Mr. Weller's knowledge of London, "intimate and peculiar." Every detail is at his fingers' ends, and most of my questions were anticipated by his lucid exposition of what has been done and is now being attempted towards bringing University methods of study within reach of the very classes which can be most benefited by them.

Shortly before my visit a paragraph had gone the round of the newspapers, in which was made what to many people must have seemed the very remarkable statement that, owing to the most recent expansion of the Extension scheme, it was now possible for a student to spend twenty months at Cambridge and take his degree at a cost not exceeding £100. I asked Professor Stuart if this statement correctly represented the facts.

"In effect it is true," he answered. "Twenty months would represent in practice the theoretical two

years of residence—from October in one year to the June twelvemonth following. There is no reason why more than £100 should be spent during that period, since the cost of living is almost the only expenditure. The University itself is practically open; most of the professors' lectures are free, and there are only a few guineas to be paid in fees. The possibility of doing this came about through the University Extension movement in this way. Formerly the right to exemption from one year's residence was restricted to those who had attended affiliated colleges. When the students of those colleges have passed through a curriculum of three years, we give them the privilege of missing one year of residence at Cambridge. This privilege was originally granted to encourage the foundation of local colleges; but it seems to us now unwise to endeavour only to increase the number of those colleges, and it has therefore been decided by the Senate of the University—whose decision will, however, have to be given the force of law by the Queen in Council—to extend these facilities to every student desiring to avail himself of them, who has attended the courses of lectures given at any local centre under the Extension system."

"So that there is now an end to the necessity of spending three years at an affiliated college before the year's remission could be earned?"

"The remission can now be obtained in either way. It has latterly been felt that it was unfair not to allow the student at a local centre the same advantages as were possessed by students of the affiliated colleges. We did not wish to make anybody suffer because there happened not to be any such college in his neighbourhood."

"Then this action on the part of the University indicates no dissatisfaction with the work of the affiliated colleges?"

"Not the least. Our experience of the colleges has been thoroughly satisfactory. And I should like to say that the objection which was made when we first proposed to grant the remission privilege to the colleges—that it would hinder men from going to the University—has turned out to be more than fallacious. The number of students at Cambridge has shown a tendency to increase, rather than to diminish, since the

privilege was granted. As soon as our decision has been ratified, the remission will be given to every person who has gone through a course of three years, to be prescribed by the University, in connection with the Extension lectures and classes, and who has passed the required examinations."

"And a University degree will then be within reach of any working man who can afford to spend a little over £100, spread over five years?"

"It will be quite possible; but you must remember that it is a difficult matter for a working man to spend ten months a year, for two years, away from his home and his work. Still, the possibility is there." Mr. Stuart went on to tell how this difficulty had, in a small way, been met. In the winter of 1884, four prizes of £10 each were offered in the Northumberland mining district—one to the male, and one to the female student, in each of the two terms, who should take the highest place in the examination at the close of the course of local lectures, to enable them to spend a month at Cambridge in the Long Vacation; there to continue, in the laboratories and museums, the work in which they had been engaged in the local lectures. It was an essential condition that the male students should be workmen in or about the coal-mines, and that the female students should be members of a mining family. The four students who obtained the prizes had taken up Physical Geography and Physiology. They all went to Cambridge together, and the women were housed at Newnham. A number of special lectures were given to the party, and the experiment was in every way a success. "This plan," added Professor Stuart, "seems to me capable of very great extension. A working man can manage to leave home for a month; and I have sometimes thought, indeed, that he might in this way manage to take his degree by accumulation, the period of local study being accepted as a portion of the term of residence. Indeed," he continued, "if the movement is allowed to grow naturally, it is capable of great advantage to the nation, socially and politically—politically in the best sense, I mean—since all classes of the community would thus be brought under the influence of the same grand old institution. Thus, great numbers of people would have a common interest, a common possession, and the inheritance of the past would be utilised in the best form to meet the needs of the present."

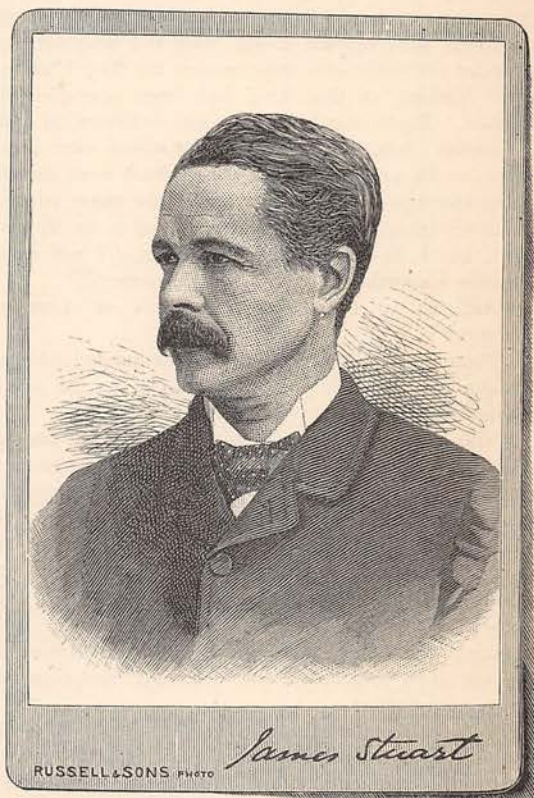
I asked Professor Stuart if he did not think the obligations to pass in Greek and Mathematics, at Cambridge, would seriously diminish the attractiveness of this inexpensive method of obtaining a degree.

"Undoubtedly the University is very conservative in the matter of Greek, which it has repeatedly refused to make optional; but when the student saves his first year of residence, he avoids Greek altogether, since the examinations at the affiliated colleges do not extend to Greek; nor, indeed, do these examinations contain the same amount of Mathematics as those at the University."

"Do you not think, Mr. Stuart, that a degree obtained in that way, with no Greek, little Mathematics,

and a shortened term of residence, would be looked down upon by other University men, and the learned world generally?"

"I don't think so at all. I believe, on the contrary, that a degree thus obtained would be better than one



PROFESSOR STUART, M.P.

got in the ordinary way, since it would indicate that its possessor had received an education distinctly above the average."

"And the practical effects of the Extension system: have they been such as to satisfy its promoters?"

"We are entirely satisfied with its practical utility; and the effects of the system are very wide. The number of people who take a degree will always be small; but more than 10,000 persons annually attend the Extension lectures and classes. A large proportion of these do solid work in the classes; that is to say, they take certain steps towards a degree, although, perhaps, not one in a thousand would ever think of going farther."

I spoke next of the complaint sometimes made that the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching is not as effective as it might be, since its certificates have not the actual University value possessed by the Cambridge Extension Certificates—especially as regards exemption from the "Previous." "Is not this," I asked, "practically shutting out London from equality with the provincial centres?"

"In that matter we have lately taken a step which will have important effects. Henceforth, the London Society and the Cambridge Syndicate will be practically under identical management. I fancy the fundamental cause of the success of the movement for the Extension of University Teaching in the provinces has been the *esprit de corps*, and the sympathetic interest taken in the movement by the young men who have carried it out, who, if I may say so, regarded themselves as missionaries for their University. Nothing of that kind has been operative in London. There may have been less cohesion of aim in London; but, on the other hand, there were difficulties to be contended with there which were absent in the country—such, for instance, as the many educational advantages already to be obtained in the Metropolis, which, in many provincial towns, did not exist until the Extension lectures were commenced."

"And as to the lesser privileges of London students?"

"From the passing of the new and extended scheme I have described to you, they will be in the same position as students anywhere else."

"The new 'Affiliation' statute opens up, among others, this important question: will institutions mainly confining their instruction to science, and other special subjects, be eligible for its advantages—supposing, of course, that such special subjects are in the list of Special Examinations for the Ordinary Degree at Cambridge—for instance, Theology, Law, Music, and Natural Science? And, of course, I assume that facilities would have to be afforded for preparation in the necessary subjects of the 'Previous' and General Examinations?"

"We shall extend the privileges of affiliation to all students who attend the courses we prescribe; but, practically, those courses could not be attended unless there were some Committee or Association prepared to carry them on for a period of at least three years. The subjects are divided into three groups: Scientific, Historical (including Political Economy), and Literary. What we require from affiliated students is, concisely, this: that they shall attend a certain number of courses in one of these groups; pass certain examinations in the subjects of it; and attend a smaller number of courses and pass less strict examinations in one other group. You will therefore see that any institution confining its attention to special subjects would, before its students could be affiliated, need to add to its curriculum a certain amount of teaching in one or other of our groups. But our requirements are so very elastic, that they could easily be met by a small rearrangement of subjects."

Reverting to the subject of working men mixing in University life, I asked Professor Stuart what sort of reception such students would get at Cambridge.

"The men and women from the North, who were there in the last Long Vacation, had a most cordial reception. They went back happier and altogether better for their month of academic work; and they would be only too glad to return to Cambridge. Their reception was everything that could be desired."

Still harping on the new statute, I inquired if it was proposed to affiliate women's colleges, and to give them the same privileges as those of the "sweet girl (under) graduates" of Girton and Newnham.

"In our local lectures," answered Mr. Stuart, "we make no distinction between men and women. All we care for is whether or not they are successful students; and they will now have all the privileges of Girton and Newnham."

"You are, I know, in favour of opening Cambridge degrees to women; but do you think that there is much likelihood of their obtaining them in the near future?"

"At present, the University is against conferring degrees upon women; but I am sure it will not be long before they obtain them."

Professor Stuart then gave me some interesting statistics of the present position of the University Extension movement. In 1885, 11,000 persons attended the courses given under its auspices, and for the most part those courses were different. Of this number 7,300 students were directly connected with Cambridge, while 3,000 resided in London. Of the 7,300 who studied in the provinces, the large number of 4,300 attended the classes as well as the lectures; that is to say, they did actual work in the way of answering questions put by the lecturers. 1,600 out of the 4,300 did papers, 1,200 of whom presented themselves for final examination in some particular subject. The total cost of instructing these 11,000 persons was £7,000, or about 13s. per head. "Look now, what a man can get for that 13s.!" exclaimed Mr. Stuart. "He can attend twelve weekly lectures, and receive a printed syllabus of them, really a brief text-book of the subject studied. He can go to the class which precedes or follows each lecture, get his papers looked over and corrected, and have a thorough talk with the lecturer about his difficulties. And he can, in the end, sit for examination, and, if he passes, get a certificate; the net result of which is, that it is a contribution towards his affiliation and towards taking his degree. I should say," he added, "that when students are affiliated in the way I have described, we shall demand of them some proof that they possess a certain amount of elementary education."

In reply to the question of what proportion of the expense of holding the courses is provided by the fees of the pupils, Professor Stuart said that in London quite half was so paid; but that in the North of England, and in the provinces generally, the proportion was not more than one-seventh, the remainder being paid from subscriptions raised locally in a great variety of ways. "Now," he said, "I think I have told you everything you will care to know. And all that I have been saying leads me to this: that every expansion of popular power has been connected with a movement in the classes concerned for their own better education; and I believe there cannot fail to be such a movement in the immediate future. The system we have been talking about has been an honest endeavour to prepare the way, and to provide materials to be utilised in such a movement."