

Lacrosse Problem.

University Students

View.
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"The Urge of Life"

Lecture by Dr. A. C. Garnett

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LACROSSE PROBLEM

Who Can Play for University?

VIEW OF STUDENTS

(By "Right Attack")

In a statement from the University Club the position in regard to the qualification rule, according to its point of view, is set out as follows:—

"In view of the advertise criticism that has been levelled at the University Club in certain quarters on account of the enforcement of the eligibility rule, its members are anxious that the case should be clearly advanced. Critics declare that University is obtaining the services of players who have been taught the game by other clubs; that it is unfortunate for a player to have to play for University merely because he may be doing one or two subjects to assist him in his business; and that the rule should have been enforced before.

"These objections, when closely examined, will be found to be entirely lacking in substance. The first is a criticism that might with equal justice be urged against the whole district system, which compels a man to play for the club in whose district he resides, and it does not matter for whom he played the previous season, or where he learned the game.

"With regard to the second objection, it should be borne in mind that every club, except University, has the right to debar any player resident in its boundary from playing with other clubs.

Loss of A Grade Players

"University is compelled to draw its players from genuine students of the University, and unless the club had the right to demand that all players eligible to play for it should do so, it is quite probable that it would be unable to put a team in A Grade. There can be no good reason why a commerce student should be exempt from the rules any more than, for example, a medical student.

"It is difficult to discover any force in the third point. It might be pointed out that had the clubs playing the students in question in the past observed the rules of the association and applied to the secretary of the University Club for permission to play the men, the matter would have cropped up several years ago. It should be realised that it is quite possible for lacrosse players from other clubs to attend night lectures without the knowledge of the secretary of the lacrosse club.

"It should be remembered that it was at the request of the University Club that the power it once had of including graduates in its team was taken away. And in consequence the club loses on an average at least four A Grade players every year, most of whom join other clubs."

Right Not Questioned

In connection with the statement should be borne in mind that, as far as can be ascertained, no one has questioned the right of University to command the support of all those players who may be genuine students and eligible to play for that club as required by the constitution of the South Australian Lacrosse Association. Often, however, matters are decided, not upon what might be the literal interpretation of a rule, but upon what has become an established custom. The present case is an instance of this, to the extent that although a rule was framed in 1921 giving University Club certain definite qualification rights, it has never exercised those rights fully. The result has been that during the intervening years many young players who may have attended lectures at the University for a brief period in connection with their calling have not regarded themselves as genuine University students, and have consequently joined district clubs without intimating in any way to the officials of those clubs that they were connected with the University.

The district clubs have not made any overtures to University Club for permission to play those men because they had no idea, firstly, that they attended lectures, and secondly, that their slender connection with the University merited such action.

In addition the University club made no attempt to have the rule fully enforced, and having disregarded their privileges in that way, it may be taken for granted that what has become a custom during the past seven years met with their approval.

There is another aspect of the matter which is likely to become prominent in the near future should the University Club seek to claim rights beyond the original intention of the qualification rule. This question is—Who is a genuine student? When the association framed the qualification rule its members regarded a genuine student as one who enrolled at the university for the purpose of proceeding to a degree or diploma with the full intention of taking the prescribed course, and sitting for his degree or diploma in due course.

No exception would be taken to the University Club claiming such men for but if it presses its claim to men who have signed up for the purpose of attending lectures in just one or two subjects and who intend to retire from those studies after a year or two it would mean that the club was attempting to give the rule wider powers than it was intended to possess. The position has changed somewhat since the rule was framed.

THE "URGE" OF LIFE.

A Fascinating Study.

"Instinct and Humanity." By Dr. A. Campbell Garnett, Litt.D. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Dr. Garnett, who fills the responsible post of lecturer to the tutorial classes in philosophy in the Adelaide University, has earned the gratitude of all interested in psychology by publishing in a revised form that will adapt it for popular reading the able thesis which procured for him in 1925 a doctorate of letters in the Melbourne University. The author justly claims credit for having made the work "comprehensible and helpful to intelligent and thoughtful members of the general community," and it is this achievement that renders his work so valuable. No technical term is left unexplained; and as Macaulay was publicly thanked by a deputation of working men for having, for the first time "made history readable," so the Workers' Educational Association, with which Dr. Garnett has been associated for five years, could, with justice, render him a like tribute in respect to the more abstruse subject with which he deals. Dr. Garnett has the gift of clear and vivid expression, and having through his work acquired a thorough knowledge of the difficulties encountered by the untutored mind, desirous of illumination on one of the most talked-of sciences of the day, he is eminently fitted to guide the inexperienced searchers after truth through the labyrinthine intricacies of psychology.

Very suggestive is Dr. Garnett's epitome of the history of philosophic thought from the time when, taking a hint from Socrates, Plato, in his "Republic," presented to mankind a map of life which they had only to study to achieve happiness. Socrates said men went wrong through ignorance of how to live. Adopt my plan, said Plato, and you will have, if not a perfect world, fit (as Lloyd George would say) for heroes, at least the best world which men, imperfect themselves, could ever hope to inhabit. Aristotle in his ethics tried his hand in the fabrication of a universe that should be ruled by reason. Later came Bentham with his recommendation to abide by the dictates of nature as expressed in pleasure and pain, but as the finer instincts rebelled against subjection to these two

criteria, and like the martyrs of all creeds protested that there were more powerful influences than pleasure and pain, utilitarianism had to go. Modern philosophy followed, with its declaration that the only master known to mankind is impulse, good or bad, whose origins may be traced back to the brute stage, though their final outcome may give mankind a place higher than that of the angels. At his best, man has left the beasts far behind him, just as at his worst he is still mentally consorting with the lions and tigers, or perhaps the snakes and hogs.

The Driving Power in Life.

This irresistible impulse to keep moving Dr. Garnett designates as "the urge of life." It differentiates a living creature from a stone. Even if the body be absolutely quiescent, the mind never can be, either sleeping or waking. Is the energy of body and mind derived from the food swallowed, and, like steam in a boiler, requires to be worked off? The play of young animals and children, as the author points out, is explained on this ground. They would not know what to do with their superfluous energy—superfluous, that is to say, after the ends of mere existence are served—if they could not find an outlet for it in this way. In the same manner people eat and drink more than is required to sustain life, and what more natural than that the surplus energy thus created should find an involuntary outlet in mental activity? This theory as to the origin of the craving for play was championed by Herbert Spencer and others, and held the field till it was combated by Karl Groos, who showed that long after they must have exhausted any superfluous energy, children went on playing. In the same way a vast amount of thinking is done by people too spare and thin to have acquired from their food any surplus of energy. There is, whatever its origin, an original urge, or driving-power, in life, independent of any energy derived from food or anything else. If Dr. Garnett's theory be sound, and he advances strong reasons for it, this "urge" manifests itself in the form of "expectation." Expectation he describes as "the one essential psychological condition of all physical activity." It underlies the automatic movements of habit, no less than deliberate activities, for it was expectation that was responsible for the activities that have become a habit. The power of expectation is shown in various ways. It is at the bottom of auto-suggestion. In Couc's famous experiment, the subject is told to clasp his hands, and then to do his utmost mentally to persuade himself that he cannot unclasp them, the experimenter all the time insisting that he cannot. Presently he is told to unclasp them, and finds himself unable. Why? Because the expectation that he will find himself unable has become so strong as to affect his capacity for movement in this direction. The same with faith-healing. The patient expects with such earnestness to be cured that he really is cured. The same sense of expectation runs through animated nature. The bird has it when it starts nesting. The sight of a twig or a bit of straw or mud stimulates an expectation that it will pick the object up, and, picking it up suggests carrying it to a tree, and so through the various actions that culminate in the construction of the nest.

The Problem of the Ages.

Whence does this expectation or impulse come? If this question could be solved we should advance far in solving the riddle of mind. The Freudian doctrine assumes the impulse to be a quest for pleasure, mainly sexual, to which he gives the name Libido. Adler interprets the impulse as akin to Nietzsche's will to power. Everyone is struggling with more or less success to be "top dog," and to lord it over other individuals, or perhaps, like Mussolini, over a nation or nations. Bergson describes it as the "elan vital," which with some individuals may take a sexual form, and with others a domineering or self-assertive one. Whatever shape the impulse may take, it will be a driving-force. But this driving-force, it should be understood, covers all activities, conscious as well as unconscious. It is as much at the bottom of the digestive processes of the stomach as of the ex-Kaiser's or of Mussolini's egomaniacal desire to bring all Europe, if he can, into subjection to himself. How this driving-force affects the body, in other words, what are the relations between mind and body, is of course the problem of the ages. Is the mind a separate entity or a function of the body, or are they inseparably inter-related, and, if so, in what way? There is Morton Price, with his system of brain "neurons," according to which psychical impressions leave some trace on the brain as sound will on a gramophone disc. An effort of memory means that the brain, like the disc, under an appropriate stimulus, is restoring these neurograms to the consciousness. You learn a poem, in other words register it on the brain, and the brain at call reproduces what is registered. Then comes McDougal with his doubt as to whether memory is really the merely mechanical process suggested. If it were it would be as easy to memorise one thing as another; but we know that intelligence plays a large part in memorising; that a string of meaningless words is more difficult to commit to memory than a passage in prose or verse (though two or three times the length), that has a meaning. Sometimes the memory will fail to restore the ipsissima verba, but will repeat the meaning in other words. What then becomes of the theory as to memory being nothing but a physical reaction?

The author's conclusion, which is reached by a thoughtful examination of every known theory, and by independent reflection on his own part, is that the impulse or "urge of life" preceded in point of time the cell or organisation of cells through which it is manifested; in other words, that the cell did not produce the energy with which it is charged, but was itself the creation of that "positive element which we find working in and through it." Before life existed on the planet the "urge" was present in some form in inanimate matter, itself the creation of some universal driving power. There may have been a time when all matter was suffused with some form of consciousness, which it lost when the driving power became "absorbed in a mighty new development, though localised in a minute point of space," viz., the cell, which had the gift of multiplying itself till, in the process of evolution mankind appeared. It is difficult in any notice to do justice to this thoughtful work, which, apart from the development of its main thesis, throws a flood of light on many activities of the human mind innate and acquired, and discusses such questions as instinct, altruism, and the influences that impel humanity to pursue its highest ideals.