

R E V I E W S

REDBRICK UNIVERSITY. By Bruce Truscott. (Faber; 10s. 6d.)

'Such is the English University System: two ancient collegiate universities ("Oxbridge") . . . , two more modern collegiate universities . . . one large and overgrown, one small and retiring (London and Durham); seven modern universities, mainly non-residential . . . , and five university colleges ("Redbrick"). Mr. Truscott concentrates 'mainly on the seven,' and 'exclusively from the point of view of the Arts Faculties' therein.

This book, the publishers tell us, 'is believed to be the first detailed discussion of the problem of the Modern University,' and being a genuine discussion of a mass of detailed material it is likely to play a large part in all that is said and done about the English universities in the near future. Let it be granted at once that it has considerable merits. First, it is serious and sincere; being obviously the fruit of wide and diligent study at first hand. Secondly, it is sober and rational; it presents a diversity of views, compares them and judges calmly in favour or disfavour. Thirdly, it rests on this basic truth, that universities exist primarily for the sake of the 'intrinsic value of knowledge'; they have their characteristic being and activity because, as Cardinal Newman insisted, 'knowledge is an end in itself.'

On the whole, then, Mr. Truscott takes a sane and clear view of the subject. He is certainly well informed. He has moved about his academic world or worlds, he has examined it from many angles, he is familiar with many points of view as well as with a host of organisational and financial facts. He is, he says, 'one who besides having long experience at Oxbridge and Redbrick, has both taught and studied in foreign universities . . . visited almost all the universities of one of the Dominions, and made an intimate study of university life in the United States.' Such an itinerary and such experience must be rare. It is reflected in this book with a blend of acidity and sympathy which should have a good effect on all that world.

For we have here an examination by analysis, a weighing of evidence and a sheaf of critical judgments which are sometimes most valuable. As examples of this power of judgment, I would instance the whole discussion of the relative merits of Oxbridge and Redbrick (chap. 1) with its summary of suggested reforms; the remarks on the relation of teaching to research; on the emptiness of a current notion of 'general culture'; on the old alternative, Lectures or Reading; on the use of Libraries; on the specious antithesis of Searcher (the enlightened) and Researcher (the fact-grubber); on the need for research; on the connection between scholarship and character and scholarship and the 'critical faculty.' How right is this for

instance: '. . . develop a critical faculty . . . that will never be accomplished by filling the time-table with general subjects. It is only when one begins to know a subject deeply that this faculty has any real scope. At the end of . . . twelve lectures on Pascal's *Lettres Provinciales* the student may not be qualified to express himself critically on the theological questions which it raises, but he will be better educated by the experience than if he spends the same twelve hours . . . on "Outlines of Theology for Laymen".'

Properly to discuss the criticisms and suggestions made here would take the space of a lengthy article, besides calling for far more factual data than I possess. Here I can only commend by indications. Certain remarks, in particular, catch the eye: 'To the idea of a University only the "Fellows," the researchers, are essential. There could perfectly well be a university which . . . had no undergraduates at all'; 'the committee-man hardly ever sees research in its true perspective'; 'the lecturer (as opposed to the author) is speaking expressly to the immature'; '"You know," said A, "poor old C has lost so many of his lecturers that he's had to give up research altogether."' "I should think better of him," replied B, "if he had given up his teaching altogether"'; 'Scholarship and character are inseparable'; 'we must always be readier and more eager to learn than to teach.'

To balance these commendations I suggest that Mr. Truscott's study is defective and unsatisfactory in the degree in which it *proposes*. Its strength lies chiefly in criticism. It seems, also, to make valuable proposals in the field of organisation and finance where reforms are likely to start. The sketch of the ideal English University System ('Let there be eleven of approximately equal size, all in the main residential,' etc.) is sure to claim attention. Behind the whole discussion, however, one senses a certain vagueness and weakness on the more abstract level of principle—a vagueness which appears, for example, in the means proposed for stimulating the right attitude to 'disinterested knowledge,' as well as in the rather wishful pages on Religion with their proposal of an undenominational university chapel in each university. Something perhaps is lacking in Mr. Truscott's conception of that knowledge whose value is 'intrinsic.' He chides Newman—not quite fairly—but are his own principles clearer or as clear? But the issue raised here, with that great name from the past, is more than a reviewer can deal with.

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POLISH SCIENCE AND LEARNING, No. 3. (Issue dedicated to the anniversary of the death of Nicholas Copernicus.) (Oxford University Press; 2s. 6d.)

The third issue of *Polish Science and Learning* contains five articles and a short note, which together provide an admirable, compact and lucid account of the life and work of Copernicus. Professor St.