

RHODES AND OTHER SCHOLARS

LAWRENCE GARDEN

UP to the early nineteen-hundreds, the influence of Oxford and Cambridge upon Canadian life was exercised almost wholly through men of Old-Country birth from their professorial chairs in our universities. Before the institution of the Rhodes scholarships, very few Canadians went either to Oxford or to Cambridge. We who graduated from Canadian universities at the turn of the century were just ahead of the first appointments by the Rhodes Foundation. Now, after thirty years, we have the older Rhodes men in their full maturity; we can see their achievements, and try to assess the results of Cecil Rhodes's idea.

There are men who profess to see no useful result. "Where *are* these Rhodes scholars who have been so much talked about?", they ask. Others, who are more in touch with at least some Rhodes men, have thought the whole scheme more or less a failure because so many of the scholars have remained in academic life as teachers and professors. And so on.

These are superficial views. In reply to the first, it may be said that the Rhodes men do not go about wearing an emblem; if they are sometimes hard to recognize, the reason may perhaps be found in the provinciality of our Canadian public opinion, which frowns upon any outward variation from the conventional. Of the second, it is necessary only to say that the teaching profession is in one sense the greatest of all professions. One of the very definite gains from the long-continued economic depression is that a considerable number of our best young men have gone and are going into teaching rather than into business.

It is easy enough to criticize the Rhodes men in other ways. Some of them have used their advantages altogether selfishly, allowing them to benefit no one but themselves. Others, though they show fine type of citizenship, do not seem to have done any more, as far as can be judged outwardly, than if they had never held their scholarships. But it must also be said that there are still others of the Rhodes men who, without self-advertisement, have done great things—and they have done them in such a way as to make it plain that without their time at Oxford and its re-

sultant enlargement of vision and interest they could not have gone so far.

On the whole, the balance is in favour of Cecil Rhodes's great idea. The most convincing proof of this, aside from the part played by the best of his scholars in our life, is that in Canada and the United States there are now other Foundations sending men from our younger universities to the ancient universities of Great Britain. A further proof is that scholarships of the same kind have been set up in Great Britain to send their young men out to Canadian and American universities. Imitation is said to be the sincerest form of flattery: in this case imitation has resulted in the movement of "Rhodes" men becoming a two-way traffic, which is steadily increasing.

From the point of view of a mere onlooker, but one who has known a few Rhodes scholars intimately and has heard something of the work of the Selection Committees, it would seem that there has been a change in the method of choice. Originally, academic standing came first, proficiency at games was second, and there was always the pious hope that those who were chosen might develop into public-spirited men, that they would be willing to give time to public service, especially in political life. (It has sometimes been said that this last point was Rhodes's chief wish and hope—if it was, it has not worked out very well in Canada.) In other words, the first candidates were chosen because, as nearly as those responsible for nominating them could judge, they were the mental and physical aristocrats in each annual group of graduates.

Of late years, however, the emphasis has been changed. More and more it has come to be that mere high academic standing, combined with a place on the senior rugby team or a track record, is not enough. The attempt now is to discover young men, *among* those of highest standing under our present system, who show signs of being able to be educated in the true sense, and who already have something of that "spontaneous and disinterested intellectual curiosity" which is the hallmark of the mature educated man. The later idea has been that the man who can be so educated is likely to be the most useful citizen, able to do his own job competently, to give some time to public service, and contribute something vital to the life of the country as a whole.

Awarding of the scholarships is obviously a serious responsibility. Competition for them is very keen; a score of candidates may be eliminated in choosing one. Among those eliminated there must be a proportion who would have done well had they

had the chance. It is even possible that at times the best candidates, if they are of a slowly maturing type or are not good at being interviewed, will be counted out by the Selection Committees. There have been, and there will continue to be, such errors of judgment, but that will always be true of the working of any human agency. It is safe to say that, on the whole, the selection of the scholars has been carried out very competently.

Now, outside the field of actual candidates, there will be in any graduating group a few men who, while they do not measure up to the standard demanded for the Rhodes and other similar Foundations, yet have in them the qualities that make for success in life. In the ordinary course they will begin their training for business or the professions, along with the rank and file of the graduates of their year. They will have no further chance of real liberal education, which is a very different thing from acquiring commercial acumen or professional dexterity.

Would it not be worth while—very much worth while—if experienced academic men were on the watch for such youths, and should suggest to their parents that if it is at all possible, financially, they should be given a chance to go abroad after getting a Canadian degree? Ought not a man to be willing to make considerable sacrifice to give his son such a chance if his professors recommend it? Would it not be an interesting hobby for a wealthy man, to send over one such young man every year or two? Unless British connection and traditions mean nothing to us Canadians, this should be a compelling challenge—to see if a young graduate who is not in the first flight as a mark-getter, and who plays his games for fun and exercise rather than glory, may not nevertheless also benefit from contact with the older universities.

Not long since, a graduate of this type spent a year in England, after an Honours degree in Arts. He had worked in different financial offices in his summer holidays; he went to the London branch of one of them for four months, and then had three terms at Cambridge.

Let his letters speak for him: "Very happy in the office, every one is friendly... Work is the same thing wherever you find it, but the attitude to it varies; over here there is none of the slanging back and forth in the office, and between offices, that marked the passage of time" in Bay Street, Toronto. He notes "the civility of everyone, no matter with whom he is dealing." He believes he is "learning something that could not be acquired in any other way."

Later: "London is a pure joy... it grows on one more and more... all these things one has read and heard of, it's almost

too good to be true... It is a great thing to be a British subject and to feel that it all 'belongs'."

At Wimbledon, "...saw the once invincible Cochet put out in straight sets...also saw Borotra, George Lott..." While watching the tennis, "...fell in with a man, a good deal older than I... he practises at the parliamentary bar...took me to dinner at his club..." This barrister sent him a card for the Members' Gallery of the House of Commons: "...heard Ramsay MacDonald, Snowden, Austen Chamberlain...when the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms found I was a Canadian he told me a lot about procedure and about the members who were in the House...but I did *not* manage to wangle tea on the terrace, had it instead at Lyons in Victoria Street for 5½d.!"

Dinner with the London manager of a New York financial house, who "talked about Anglo-Canadian, Anglo-American and Canadian-American relations, and their interplay....he asked me a lot about Canada, especially historically." He mentions "the Guards practising for the trooping of the colour...a magnificent sight."

Politics are always an interest: the formation of the first National Government; the Beauharnois scandal; comment on Canadian tariff regulations; about American relations to Europe: "This Franco-German quarrel along the Rhine has been going on for nearly 1000 years...the U. S. A. are barely 150 years old... it is all very well for Hoover to talk in the movietone, but one is inclined to belittle American economic greatness as a means of settling such a feud." From Ryde, at the Schneider Cup race: "...The S-6-B shot overhead like a meteor...the machine was a glorious sight...blue and silver shining in the sun...leaving a trail of exhaust smoke a quarter of a mile long." At Bramshott Camp: "...the road lined with Canadian maples...thought of one's own people who were there...it is now grown over, parade-grounds, trenches...everything looking like any other common."

He is at the theatre as often as possible: of Cedric Hardwicke's "Edward Barrett", "...my feelings were mixed...hating his tyranny...pitying his love for Elizabeth. Egocentric, domineering, sure of his own holiness...but pitiable, as are all tyrants when the storm breaks over them...how far is it reasonable to rule people even for their own good and not for what the ruler conceives to be their good?"

He calls the weather hard names: "foul"—"gloomy"—"cold"—"grim"—"a miserable sort of drizzling haze all day long," but under other conditions, "a fine day in England is worth crossing

the ocean to see," and "what a country when the sun is out." There are weekends at Reigate, Pevensey, Oxford, Cambridge, St. Leonard's. Driving from Worcestershire up to London, "Anything more beautiful than the Cotswolds unfolding from their mantle of mist in the early morning I have yet to see... it is no wonder everyone loves this country despite all drawbacks." From Loch Rannoch, Perthshire, in March, "a charming place... the people speak so softly and quietly... wonderful long walks on the moors, putting up grouse and plover as we went along", and "a long motor drive up Glen Lyon... Ben Lawers with a fresh fall of snow on it."

From Cambridge: "...like the life, though Heaven only knows when one does any real work." He soon found out: "Cambridge... demands a kind of excellence unknown at home; my supervisor... doesn't want a chronicle of events, cribbed from books, but a reasoned deduction from a set of facts... The standard is so high... so much ground to be covered... it is not a question of one's hours of reading, but of years of reading, coupled with new powers of appreciation." But it is stimulating, not discouraging, for he is "more and more interested all the time."

There are frequent comments upon the interest of the ancient college buildings, customs, traditions, "...the flavour of the place." After the Christmas vacation, "...didn't realize how attached to this place I'd become." In the spring, "The Backs are wonderful... a mass of aconite, crocus and snowdrops... what a sight they are!"

There are the usual outside things. At the College Historical Society, "...the infinite trouble taken to fit a new piece of knowledge into the general framework." A Union debate on independence for India, "...a queer performance... nothing constructive from the Indian speakers." Again, at the Union, "a Labour-Nationalist M.P. and the general secretary of the T. U. C... the latter was very good... a politician and a lawyer can slang one another beautifully!" Lunch on a Sunday (in Corpus Christi) with the Vice-Chancellor, "...in the centre of the table... the famous Essex Cup, given to the University by Robert Devereux, the 'boy-friend' of Queen Elizabeth. I knew what it was... thereby getting some kudos." There are meetings with dons of various colleges, and with New Zealanders, Australians, South Africans, Indians, Scots, Americans, in their college rooms, "...coal fires and plenty of cheery friends."

At the end, just before sailing, "I have had an 'annus mirabilis'... its full value will not be realized for a long time to come". A senior Fellow of his College wrote of him, "I shall miss his visits

...whatever the outcome of the Tripos, sending him here was a wise move. It de-provincializes or de-parochializes a man to live in two countries...he will gain by the experience."

And that is all. It may be said, with perfect justice, that in itself it does not amount to very much, and that all these "reactions" are quite normal, usual and to be expected from any intelligent young Canadian under the stimulus of Cambridge and of the English scene. True: but note that they are *not* the "tourist" comments of a shorter visit in later life. The young Canadian must go over at the right age and for at least a year, in order to be so stimulated, and surely the best time is just after he gets his degree at home. One cannot help feeling that it would be a great gain if more and more young Canadians could get this stimulus, and the enlargement of outlook which it cannot fail to give them, before settling down to work for a living.