

**APOLOGIA ACADEMICA;
OR, REMARKS ON A
RECENT ARTICLE IN
THE EDINBURGH REVIEW**

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Apologia academica; or, Remarks on a recent article in the Edinburgh Review by James Ingram

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JAMES INGRAM

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PREFACE.

THE Reviewer has scattered his observations over so wide a field, and in so loose a manner, that, as it is difficult to follow him closely in his line of argument, so is it still more difficult to reconcile his manifold contradictions, or to reduce his learned farrago of misrepresentations to any thing like a tangible shape. We have not only the whole "history of Academical teaching, previous to the publication of the Laudian code," that is, from the original constitution of Oxford, as an University, of which very little is known with any certainty, and whatever is worthy of credit, perhaps something more, is taken from the historians of Oxford and Paris; Wood, Duboullay, and Crevier; but the "Corpus Statutorum" is exhausted to prove, what every body knows, and no person is therefore disposed to deny, that great changes have taken place from that time to the present, amounting to what the writer considers a "revolution;" and some of these changes, even in important and "essen-

tial points," appear to be such as justly to merit his approbation. Even in his opinion, "during the last twenty-five years, so great an improvement has been effected, that in some essential points Oxford may, not unworthily, be proposed as a pattern to most other Universities!" (p. 426.) And yet we had been previously told, (p. 390.) that "in Oxford the *Corpus Statutorum* introduced little or no change in the mechanism of Academical instruction; nor has this been done by any *subsequent* enactment."

There are indeed so many extraordinary and unexpected contradictions of this nature, so many qualified assertions, so much of the complimentary blended most artificially with the vituperative, which like two opposite powers in mechanics are ingeniously introduced to preserve the equilibrium, that the Reviewer appears to be perfectly ready to be retained to plead on either side, and would with as much facility become counsel for the defendant, as he has now stepped forward the advocate for the prosecution. Great allowance must

therefore be made for a certain strain of forensic exaggeration, and professional ambiguity, which these strictures of the Reviewer display. Thus, when we read, that the University has been long since subverted, abolished, annihilated—that it is “in abeyance—*magni stat nominis umbra*”—when we hear of the “dethronement of the University by the Colleges, (p. 406.)—the encroachment of the Fellows—their monopoly—their usurpations,” &c.—(pp. 412, 417, 420, 426.) the contrast between the system *de jure* and the system *de facto*—the “factitious and absurd omnipotence of the HEADS in the Academical polity”—these “Arminian heads”—these “oligarchs”—let us listen to the consoling refresher in page 426.—“The strictures which a conviction of their truth, (*credat Judæus*.) and our interest in the honour and utility of this venerable *school*, have constrained us to make on the conduct of the Hebdomadal meeting, we mainly apply to the Heads of Houses of a former generation, and even to them solely in their corporate capacity. Of the *late* and *present* members of this

body, we are happy to acknowledge, that, during the last twenty-five years, so great an improvement has been effected through their influence, that in some essential points Oxford may, not unworthily, be proposed as a pattern to most other Universities!" There are some other contradictions and inconsistencies of minor importance. Thus we are at one time introduced to a "*multitude* of College Tutors—a *cloud* of Tutors"—and then, suddenly, as if by some potent spell, or magic wand, they are reduced to "some fifty;" then "forty;"—no great number, when we consider the aggregate establishment of Colleges and Halls in the University; being an average of somewhat less than *two* to each society. But this *elastic* method of computation, be it remembered, was convenient for the writer's argument.

The leading object of the Reviewer appears to be, to elevate the professorial system; such as it formerly existed, and is now supposed to be in abeyance; and to decry the tutorial, as a modern usurpation, and a monopoly. Yet the writer is obliged

to admit, that a combination of both these systems is implied "in the constitution of a perfect University," (p. 426.) Now it is notorious, that such combination does actually exist at present, and is in full operation. The number of the Professors almost equals that of the Tutors; and lectures, of which due notice is regularly given in each succeeding Term, are constantly delivered to public audiences and private classes in almost every department. Most of the Professors in Oxford and Cambridge have previously been Tutors; and some are still partially engaged in tuition; and not the least idea of rivalry or jealousy was ever known to exist between the two bodies. A similar doctrine of two other opposite influences in the University, the Heads of Houses and the Professors, about the time when the *Corpus Statutorum* was ratified, is equally groundless and visionary; being the mere creation of the Reviewer's fancy. Of some thirty professorships now established, not one half were in existence at the period to which the writer refers. Twenty-four

have arisen from the individual bounty of successive benefactors long after the commencement of the seventeenth century; and, with the exception of the Margaret professorship, a sort of tender biennial, first planted by the fair hands of the amiable Countess of Richmond, and now carefully nourished by the Graduates in Divinity, that it may grace a stall in Worcester cathedral; the remainder, though founded by Henry the Eighth as some small expiation for his avaricious plunder and spoliation, were not endowed so magnificently as they now are till nearly a century afterwards. To this it may be added, that two of the noblest benefactions of this kind originated in the magnificence of Sir Henry Savile; who was Warden of Merton six and thirty years; and therefore cannot be supposed to have been influenced by any wish to create, or promote, a rival interest against his brethren, the Heads of Houses, by the establishment of two professorships at once. But the Reviewer has probably fallen into one of his usual anachronisms; and he means to refer

us back to a more ancient period. He is evidently not blind to the "defects" of the professorial system, as it was formerly constituted in Oxford; and places among the foremost, that "the salaries, which made up the whole emoluments attached to the different Chairs, were commonly too small to afford an *independent*, far less an *honourable*, livelihood." Many attempts were therefore made, perhaps not absolutely justifiable, of which the Reviewer has not given us a satisfactory explanation, to support this *dependent* and *dishonourable* system, by imposing various assessments under the head of collecta, or *culets*, and fees for "unendowed lectures;" and an annual sum was at length voted by Parliament, in furtherance of the same object, so late as the reign of Queen Anne; the continuance of which was made the subject of a slight discussion not long since in the House of Commons. How a "reformed" Parliament may hereafter deal with this grant, remains to be seen. The precedent is bad; and might, if carried to any extent, render these salaried Professors dependent