

DOCTOR ROSS. The friends of American universities and seekers after truth everywhere will deplore the attempt to restrain the freedom of thought and to curb scientific investigation, as illustrated by the request for the resignation of Dr. Ross, of the chair of sociology at Stanford University. Doctor Ross is a man of recognized ability, in his profession, throughout the scientific world. It is reported that his resignation was demanded because of his opposition to the importation of Coolie labor. On several occasions he committed the grievous fault of declaring that the Pacific coast states were menaced by the immigration or Chinese Coolies.

Science is valuable only as it aids us to ascertain the truth. If those who are carrying on the great work of scientific research and original investigation, must modify their deductions to conform to certain interests, either political or pecuniary, the value of their work is lost and we may as well abolish the chairs of science in our universities. For it would be better to do without scientific instruction if a half truth must be told for a whole truth.

Free Speech. THE CONSERVATIVE trusts that the removal of Doctor Ross will not be a precedent for other universities and that the University of Nebraska will ever remain free from the demoralizing influence of intolerance and bigotry; that it will always respect and hold sacred the most cherished of all American privileges, the freedom of thought and speech. Let those in charge make it a place to teach young men *how* to think and not *what* to think. The safety of our institutions lies in the cultivation of a liberal and tolerant feeling of respect for the opinions of others. The university, the place in which young men are trained "how to live," as Herbert Spencer aptly puts it, is the place in which this spirit of toleration should be encouraged rather than destroyed.

The time is opportune for a word of warning relative to the suggestion that has appeared occasionally in the press of this state and is reiterated in the Nebraska correspondence of the Boston Transcript, reproduced elsewhere in this paper, that there must be a change in the Chancellorship of the University of Nebraska as soon as the rival party secures control of the board of regents. Nearly every enterprise in this state operated by the public, because of the intense party feeling of those in charge, is more poorly managed than it would be under private ownership. As an illustration of this the Blind Institute of this city, the various institutions for the insane and feeble minded might be cited. Those in charge of the state university have a chance to prove that there is at least one

institution that the public is competent to manage. Politicians should distinguish between a political club and a university. A republican is all right at the head of a republican organization. A democrat is not out of place as president of a democratic club. But at the head of a university there should be a scholar. The scholarship of Chancellor Andrews is unquestioned. No matter what his opinions may be on questions political, he should be given the loyal support of the friends of higher education throughout the state.

EDUCATION OF THE BLIND. As there will be a change of administration at the blind institute in this city, after the inauguration of governor-elect Deitrich, a discussion of the scope of the work of this institution is quite timely. Few people really know anything about a school for the blind or have a definite idea as to what such a school should do. The prevalent notion is that a blind institute is a kind of asylum and bears the same relation to the blind that a hospital for the insane does to crazy folks. Comparatively few take the correct view, viz., that it is simply a school for the blind and is to the blind children what the public school is to the children who see. A few days ago THE CONSERVATIVE received a letter from a gentleman, well known in his community, which illustrates the general misconception about instruction for the blind. Our correspondent wished to know the qualifications for the superintendent of the blind institute, whether the position required a "good practical business man" or an "experienced educator." The following letter was written in reply:

"The qualifications for a superintendent of a school for the blind are similar to those of a teacher or superintendent in any other school. The blind institute is, or should be, an educational institution, a place where young men and women receive instruction. It differs from the ordinary public school only in this particular, that it offers instruction to blind boys and girls instead of seeing boys and girls. Would you employ, as superintendent of the Brownville schools your leading merchant, banker, blacksmith, doctor, or any other 'practical business man,' or would you try to get an 'experienced educator?' If you would employ a representative banker or blacksmith as superintendent of your schools you would be consistent in favoring such a man for the head of the blind institute. Is not the blind boy deserving of at least the same consideration as the seeing boy? Is not the former as much entitled to competent instruction as the latter? Is not the misfortune of blindness a sufficient handicap for a boy without burdening him with the additional encumbrance of a faulty and neglected training?"

"The blind institute is neither a chari-

table institution nor an 'asylum.' The blind boy does not ask for charity. He is not a petitioner for alms. He asks only for that which is given every seeing boy and girl, viz., an education. It is true the education may differ in method, one being adapted to blind boys, the other to seeing boys, but the principle involved is the same.

"The superintendent of the blind institute should be a young man, not over thirty years of age, of thorough scholarship and good administrative ability. A young man is desirable for the reason that he is without 'fads' and would grow into the work, developing methods of imparting instruction as he goes along. The most successful managers of schools for the blind are those who began their work as overseers at a comparatively early age. The best teachers of the blind are the blind themselves, as they better understand the nature of their students and can more easily win their sympathy."

Professor Samuel Bacon, now living at Nebraska City, is one of the eminent blind of the country. He is a scholar of note and widely known as a teacher of the blind. He founded the Illinois and Iowa schools for the blind and later came to Nebraska and secured the establishment by the legislature of the institute for the blind at this city. Under his direction the school was in fact as well as in name a real educational institution. Unhappily for its continued growth and prosperity, it became involved in political strife. Professor Bacon was relieved and a party favorite appointed in his place.

From that time to this the school has been a football for contending political parties, a convenient place for rewarding political friends. In selecting the superintendent and teaching force the main question with the appointive power has been not "what has the applicant done" or "what can he do for the blind," but "what has he done for the party?" Special training or fitness has become a useless qualification. The school has become an old gentleman's home for broken down political wheel-horses and superannuated pulpiteers.

One of the first acts of Governor-elect Deitrich should be to investigate the Nebraska school for the blind and, in selecting a new superintendent, recognize competency and fitness, placing the welfare of the blind above all other considerations. Governor Deitrich could profitably follow the example of the state authorities of California. The Pacific coast state has had the benefit of the direction and counsel of Hon. John P. Irish, one of the best authorities upon the education of the blind in the country.

Joseph Sayers, superintendent of the Industrial Home for the Adult Blind, at Oakland California, in a recent letter to Professor Bacon, speaks in terms of deserved praise of the splendid work of Colonel Irish and pays a just tribute to Professor Bacon.