

SCIENCE

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THE GOVERNMENT OF AMERICAN
UNIVERSITIES

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THERE are perhaps some advantages in discussing the question of university government during the summer vacation, when partial detachment from professional duties makes possible a clearer perspective than when one is in the thick of the work. The problem is both difficult and urgent, and in approaching it one can not do better than remind oneself of the need of patience and good feeling in its consideration. Above all, it should be emphasized, as has already been done by Professor Jastrow in a recent number of SCIENCE, that the attack is not directed against individuals, but against a system. That system may be described as one of personal government, as opposed to government by consent or the self-government of a freely acting community. The objections against this system are directed not merely against the exercise of irresponsible power by college presidents, but against all claims on the part of any member of the university body to subject another to his personal will.

The urgent character of the problem, and the consequent significance attaching to the present agitation for reform in university government, is due to the fact that the very idea of a university as the home of independent scholars has been obscured by the present system. If it were true that only a few supersensitive individuals among university teachers were affected in their personal feeling by the power now exercised by presidents and other university administrative officers, the question would have little significance. But