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## John Bull's Other Universities

Many Americans believe that to get a university education in the United Kingdom you must go to Cambridge or Oxford and attend a residential college with a name spelled one way and pronounced another. Undoubtedly, Englishmen do go to these universities—and, undoubtedly, Englishmen enjoy their tea and crumpets—but Britain's educational resources, like the national diet, are more extensive than popular opinion in the United States has it.

A measure of this opinion may be found in the choices expressed by the candidates for a recent group of awards. The awards were the 12 Marshall scholarships for graduate study at British universities. The British government offers these scholarships each year to American citizens in recognition of the aid rendered under the Marshall plan. Subject to review in London, the British ambassador in Washington, with the assistance of an American advisory council, makes the final selection of scholars. Of the 471 candidates for 1956, more than half gave Oxford as their first or second choice, and more than half gave Cambridge similar preference.

The group charged with the selection of fellows believes that Americans should be better informed about the considerable strength of Britain's other universities. London University and the University of Edinburgh ranked third and fourth in the preferences of candidates, but little mention was made of Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Durham, Birmingham, or the rest of what the British call, in a special sense, their provincial universities.

Three British scholars have prepared papers for this issue of *Science* on scientific and engineering education in their country. The first paper tours the various institutions, noting which specialities are served at which faculties, and giving an account of the advantages in laboratory facilities and local industries that go with particular locations. The second paper is about the Royal Society of London, describing its history, the value of its traditions to the present fellows of the society, and the distribution of the fellowship among British universities. The third paper describes the working conditions of British graduate students. It considers the manner in which they are selected, their finances, the courses they take, the examinations they undergo, their research, and their possible future careers.

Of course, the British, in turn, have their views about American education. In *Cousins and Strangers*, published recently by Harvard University Press, may be found a selection of remarks by British students attending universities in this country under grants from the Commonwealth Fund. Commenting on the objectives and levels of attainment of American universities, the visiting fellows are sometimes critical and sometimes highly complimentary. Again, however, the tendency is to focus attention on only a few universities, and little mention is made of America's other educational resources.

Good intellectual relationships between our two countries require that information flow both ways. We hope the present issue of *Science* will, in part, meet the need for more information about British universities, and that scholars who visit the United Kingdom, either through international grants such as the Marshall scholarships, or through other means, will make more adequate use of the varied fare that country offers.—J.T.