

THE VARSITY.

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TO OUR READERS.

At this, the beginning of its Eighth Annual Volume, the conductors of THE VARSITY desire once more to bring before its readers some of the claims which THE VARSITY has upon the University public.

First of all, it is the University Journal. Upon this ground, it should appeal powerfully to the sympathy and support of all University men, whether graduates or undergraduates. It is, it may be said without exaggeration, the one and only link which binds the graduate to his former *Alma Mater*; and, whatever may be said, in a deprecating way, of sentiment, there can be no doubt that it plays an important part in our lives and actions. In the case of our University, especially, is it needful to cultivate such a spirit. Being under political control, and being the national University of the Province, free to all, it cannot gather about it the same class of alumni as the different church colleges are able to do. These latter are part and parcel of the regular organization and work of the different denominations, and as such appeal most successfully to the adherents of these denominations, many of whom are bound to their church colleges by other and closer ties. Loyalty to a church and its institutions is the great and enduring hold which a denominational college has over every member of the same. But the case of the University of Toronto is different. Independent as it is in one sense, it is nevertheless very dependent in another. Free from that somewhat fluctuating support which other colleges receive, it is, on the other hand, subject to political control, with all which such a system means, and to the influence of public opinion and public criticism. Its real and true strength lies in the simple and faithful regard with which her graduates and friends look after her interests. Its very life is the love and affection of its alumni. If we seem to place great stress upon this point, it is because we are most profoundly impressed with its importance. In order that such a spirit may be encouraged and kept vigorously alive, it is very necessary that the undergraduates should realize their position with regard to this matter. They should not think that their duty towards their college is compassed by a mere conventional observance of rules and regulations, payment of fees, and attendance at lectures. They should do something more than all this. They should be very jealous of the honour and reputation of the University; and, indeed, what, after all, is the University apart from the men who are, and those who hope to become, its alumni? And what is its reputation and good name worth if the graduates and undergraduates bring discredit in any way upon it? And in this connection, it may be said that there is as much injury done by apathy and neglect as by positive action.

It is, therefore, very necessary that students, above all others, should cultivate a spirit of loyalty and affection for the University, of respect for its professoriate, and of chivalrous regard for its institutions and customs. In a large University, like our own, we are apt to regard mere strength of numbers as a criterion of success, and to measure everything by this standard. But numbers may be, and often are, a great source of weakness, owing to lack of unity and cohesion. But, however greatly the tastes of students may differ, however dissimilar their characters may be, however widely their chosen paths may diverge, the University and its institutions form a common meeting-ground, a central rallying-point, at which all may unite and gather courage and inspiration for the future. We cannot all agree upon all subjects, we cannot all see

eye to eye in all matters, but we can all unite in a loyal support of our *Alma Mater*.

Amongst University institutions, THE VARSITY occupies an important place. If there is any one object for which a University should exist, it is the cultivation of literature and literary tastes. In the hurry and rush of modern business life this is apt to be overlooked, and a preference expressed for scientific and practical pursuits. This is perhaps natural, but it should not be allowed to dominate everything. A University training is a very proper preparation for a professional career, but it should not be undertaken solely with a view to its possible benefit in this direction. About all that a University training can do for a man is to furnish him with principles for future action calculated to satisfy what Matthew Arnold calls his instinct for conduct and his instinct for beauty.

In Canada we have not the leisure class, to be met with in England, nor the wealthy class, to be found in the United States, who are independent, to a great extent, of external circumstances, and who can cultivate their literary and artistic tastes without calculating as to how much they will minister to their necessities, or how far they will go in helping to secure a competence. Therefore, when we have a chance of indulging our literary tastes, and of cultivating literature and the "humanities," afforded by our four years' sojourn at a University, it is all the more necessary that we should make the best of our time, and strive to realize the fullest benefit from opportunities which may never occur again to many of us.

To those who have, or who are cultivating literature and literary tastes, and to those who take an interest in the University and its affairs, THE VARSITY affords a medium for the expression of these tastes and of that interest which the Editors have ever striven to make open and accessible to any one who takes an interest in these things. Those who have left the University can, by a criticism of current educational, literary, social, or University affairs, do a real service to the public and to the readers of THE VARSITY, and by reading its pages can keep themselves *en rapport* with contemporary life and thought at the University. Those who are still with us can find an outlet for their literary thoughts and aspirations, and will thereby obtain practice, and with practice gain confidence, power, and skill in literary composition, and independence of thought in literary criticism, all of which will have an influence far beyond the immediate present. Aided by all these agencies, and encouraged by the sympathy, confidence, and practical help of graduates, undergraduates, and friends of the University and of higher education, THE VARSITY can in some measure realize the attainment of the hopes of its founders, and can become a worthy and helpful "journal of literature, University thought, and events."

YEAR DINNERS.

At the present time it is somewhat doubtful what course will be pursued with regard to the annual University Dinner. The usual diversity of opinion is expressed, and the problem is further complicated by the proposal to hold a "union" dinner of Arts and Medical students. What the students will finally determine on is, as yet, a matter of conjecture. In case too strong a divergence of opinion may ensue, after the matter has been pretty freely discussed, THE VARSITY has a suggestion to offer which may solve the difficulty, and cut the Gordian knot.

The proposal which THE VARSITY has to offer is simply this: that the students of each year hold a dinner or supper of their own, choose their own time and place, elect their own officers, invite their own guests, and manage the affair entirely themselves.

It will be admitted without much question that with the increasing numbers who enroll themselves at the university, it has become a positive impossibility for a man to know ten per cent. of his fellow-students. All that he can now hope to do is to become acquainted with those in the same year as himself, and more or less intimately with those who are pursuing the same course as himself. This being the case, and the difficulty of large numbers again asserting itself, the plan we propose seems to meet the requirements of the case—in so far as the promotion of sociability and friendly intercourse are concerned, and we presume such are the objects in view.

Each year contains, on an average, from fifty to seventy-five students. Now, whilst it would be a practical impossibility to dine,