

The Varsity

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News Editor for this Issue:—C. D. Farquharson.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 25, 1911

ON PROMISCUOUS READING

To accuse university students of narrowness in their reading may appear at first paradoxical. The arraignment is nevertheless more just than might seem. How many students really take the opportunity offered them by four years at college of increasing their familiarity with even the best English writers of fiction? Most read a few novels and essays which are laid down for examination, and here their cultivation of the "literature of power" ceases. Many no doubt say, "We have not time now; when we have finished with textbooks and dictionaries we will have more leisure for promiscuous reading." There could not be a greater mistake. The truth is, that never again will the student have so favorable an opportunity for widening his knowledge of literature as during these four golden years.

We are aware that much stress has been laid of late on the value of intensive study. And it is indeed wise to limit our curriculum so that we may attain the culture that comes from the mastery of one subject or branch. But in growing deep we may become narrow. Because a man is studying mathematics, is he to remain ignorant of Shakespeare, Thackeray and Browning? Or when he is making a serious study of these immortals, should he close his eyes to such clear-burning if lesser luminaries as Barrie, Chesterton and Kipling, when by turning for a while to these he may at once refresh his spirit and widen his literary taste?

If the time many of us now spend on fleeting periodical literature were given to the masters of fiction, in our own day and the past, how much more would our natures be enriched! Is it because we are accustomed to stand in awe of the great novelists, and have come to regard the reading of them as a sort of sacred task, like our morning tub instead of as a pure delight, that we waste so many spare hours on mere print? But it is a fact that we do. Therefore this plea for wider reading, and a more general cultivation of the masters of fiction.

CURRENT COMMENT

ACROSS THE POND

Co-education is to be abolished in the common schools of London, Eng. They say the boys are held back because of the girl's failure to keep pace with them. Anyone who has been through the public and high schools of Ontario may well wonder what kind of girls they have in London.

A LITTLE BLUNDER

Last week a young man in New Jersey was just about to be satisfactorily annexed when the minister discovered that, instead of a marriage license, the victim had bought a license to hunt deer. The minister will preach on how easily the mind of man is confused.

CORRESPONDENCE

INTRODUCE GOWN

To the Editor of The Varsity:

Dear Sir:—I was very pleased to note your editorial in last week's Varsity, headed "Gowns". The absence of them was one of my disappointments on first coming to the University.

There are certain traditions associated with University life, which we in this twentieth century, when money-making is paramount, are losing. Such things as the cap and gown are associated with them.

We are losing the real spirit of University life and are becoming too commercial. The passing of the gown is a sign of this.

Since the opening meeting of the Lit. and the appearance of your editorial this question has been discussed considerably among the student body, and I believe that a return of the gown would be welcomed in University College. I consequently am taking the opportunity kindly afforded by The Varsity to express what I believe to be the opinion of a large section of the students.

AN UNDERGRADUATE.

GOWN NO STREET DRESS

To the Editor of The Varsity:

Dear Sir:—In your last issue you called attention to the fact that Mr. Blackstock in his address at the open meeting of the Lit had raised the question of the wearing of gowns at 'Varsity, and after very briefly setting forth the advantages of that ancient and time-honoured custom," you asked for opinions on the subject.

Undoubtedly the gown has many good points to recommend it, such as its utility, "as a pen-wipe and boot-rag.—As a clothes-saver" and "as a covering for a multitude of sins." The last point advanced, however, will not bear criticism. If the undergraduates are to add to "their academic and scholarly appearance," by the adoption of a distinct garb and have that improvement seen by the public—that, I think, was Mr. Blackstock's idea—then, it will be necessary to wear these gowns in such places as the public may see them. We must wear them about the streets. Deliver us from such a fate!

However, the chief objection is the inconvenience caused to the wearer. The large loose sleeves and the long gown are decidedly unhandy, especially, when one is seated. The inconvenience would be further accentuated by the necessity of taking lectures in the medical and Physics buildings as well as in the Main building. One might enlarge considerably on these points but space will not permit.

Sincerely yours

W. W.

UNIVERSITY FENCING

Many Events Will Take Place This Year

This year the fencing club is unusually fortunate. Public contests are the soul of any sport as everyone knows, and at present the outlook is more brilliant in this direction than it has been for years. The last year's dominion championships were postponed. We withdrew from the intercollegiate, on account of our own boxing tournaments coming on the same date. The only contests in which we took part were the Ontario championships which, unfortunately for the student body, took place during the Christmas holidays, and our own championship at the assault-at-arms. Under these circumstances, Mr. Alley was the only undergraduate who played an important part in fencing circles. A team composed of two graduates, Messrs. Duncan and Acres and Mr. Alley, won second place in the Ontario contests and Mr. Alley won the championship at the assault.

This year, however, the undergraduates will have every opportunity to distinguish themselves. We will have two sets of dominion championships in which to take part, those which were postponed in May occurring, those of November and those of the present year which will be held in the Spring. In addition to this these will be Ontario, the Inter-collegiate, and the University championships. We have planned to enter three undergraduate teams in both of the dominion contests. This will give a large number of students an opportunity of taking part in the

greatest fencing events of the year. Our seniors will compete for the university championship at the assault, the winner of which gets his T and a silver medal. The juniors will have their own contests, which will be doubly interesting this year, as the club will present the winner with a bronze plaque struck by L'Hotel des Monnairs of Paris in addition to the regular medal. The student body is earnestly requested to attend as many of these tournaments as possible. Prof. Williams will take classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays at five, but the members are urged to pair off and practice whenever possible. Any member of the executive will do his best to give beginners every possible advantage.

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W. W. CORY,
Deputy of the Minister of the Interior.

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