

IDEALS OF LIFE.

To obtain a true ideal of life is the highest object which a human being can seek. This seems a self-evident proposition to which no negative answer would be given by any intelligent young man about to face life; but, strange to say, unconsciously or otherwise, it is not the actual preponderating thought in the minds of the majority of even the most worthy.

Nothing has been more characteristic of the human race at all times than the dominant influence of environment. Our life and conduct are colored by the acts and conduct of those about us, and it is only in rare instances that men have been found strong enough to rise superior to surroundings and strike out a new and better pathway. The present age is essentially materialistic. It is useless for parsons to vociferate, or optimists to rave, about the higher conditions which now prevail as com-

posing to adopt law as a profession he dreams of attaining wealth and preferment as the goal of his hopes. The same thing applies to medicine, engineering, and even those who are thinking of the Christian ministry as a profession seem incapable of so far recognizing the supreme aims of that calling, that fat pastorships and bishoprics loom up as coveted objects.

It is, indeed, merely uttering a trite statement to remark that these aims are not in accordance with true ideals of life.

What is the true ideal, the highest ideal? It can never be associated with personal advantage as an aim. No man can enter the legal profession with the highest ideal when the object he has in view is simply his own personal advancement in the profession. The highest ideal is to devote himself to securing the noblest and best results in his profession, and, if pursuing it with that aim, he reaches, as indeed he is most likely to reach,



U. of T. Track Team, winners Intercollegiate Track Meet, 1903.

pared with the past times. True it is that intelligence is more generally diffused, that benevolent institutions are more numerous, that regard for human life and human happiness is more generally recognized and the spirit of tolerance and liberty more generally prevails. All these may be true, but the fact nevertheless remains that at this particular period of the world's history a desire for material advantage, a rush for wealth and a yearning to achieve worldly fame are as supreme, if not more so, than at any previous period of human history. As long as this condition exists true ideals will be obscured.

One of the great difficulties at the present moment is to get a fair recognition of what a true ideal is. Young men pursuing a college course are almost inevitably, owing to the characteristics of the age to which they belong, looking forward to success in their chosen professions—success from a worldly point of view—as the great purpose of life. If the young man is pro-

posed to adopt law as a profession he dreams of attaining wealth and preferment as the goal of his hopes. The same thing applies to medicine, engineering, and even those who are thinking of the Christian ministry as a profession seem incapable of so far recognizing the supreme aims of that calling, that fat pastorships and bishoprics loom up as coveted objects. It is, indeed, merely uttering a trite statement to remark that these aims are not in accordance with true ideals of life. What is the true ideal, the highest ideal? It can never be associated with personal advantage as an aim. No man can enter the legal profession with the highest ideal when the object he has in view is simply his own personal advancement in the profession. The highest ideal is to devote himself to securing the noblest and best results in his profession, and, if pursuing it with that aim, he reaches, as indeed he is most likely to reach,

One great principle may be stated with absolute certainty, namely, that the highest ideal can never be attained so long as the chief aim of a man is self-