

The Varsity

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TORONTO, JANUARY 22, 1912

DISCUSSION

The men of the University might take a leaf out of the women's book in the matter of discussion of topics of public interest. At present there are several—at University College, the Thirteen Club and the Digger's Club; at Victoria College the Junto Club; and in the University the Historical Club; but the number is far too small. In University College alone the women have five discussion clubs, a report of one of which appears elsewhere in this issue. The discussion seems to have been of a very high order; and we have little hesitation in saying that the women who could conduct such a discussion are better fitted to "wield the ballot" than at least some men about the halls. There is room for a great many more such clubs among the men—little informal clubs, where men can air their own views without being afraid of too much adverse criticism. In the junior years, as far as we know, there is no such club, where they are much needed. There should be so many clubs that it would be unusual not to belong to one. The subjects should be, as far as possible, relating to current questions, preferably politics; socialism, government supervision, conservation, Imperialism, peace, independence, a very few of the many current questions about which most of us are lamentably ignorant. If it is a question of "survival of the fittest," judging from present indications about the University one might conclude that "petticoat government" is not far off.

Let us have clubs—lots of them; reading, thinking, discussing, sanely and quietly, about the matters of interest in the world. Such clubs would be invaluable, and could not but have some effect on our politics. Let some ardent spirits in the Colleges organize them; and not throw the burden of ruling the country, as well as the home, on the shoulders of the women.

ONLOOKER'S CORNER

The worthy citizen of Toronto, the complacent burgher, sits of an evening in his gilded 'library', surrounded by two sectional book-cases, a cheery gas-log, and three calling-cards on a souvenir tray. He smokes an expensive cigar, whose band adds to the brilliance of the scene. The worthy burgher lets his mind stray over two pet prides: Toronto, the good city; and Toronto, the great critical centre for music and drama. He reflects on the number of churches, the observance of the Sabbath, the fewness of bars. He ponders on the great name Toronto has with theatrical people, as a justly critical city.

Now, the most casual observer can see that both these pet conceits are false. As to Toronto being good, I am skeptical. The present controversy over Sunday tobogganing has turned light upon the sentiments of the average citizen with regard to the observance of the day. As to the number of churches, a sharp-witted man spoke of it as the number of organs. The fewness of wicked influences, the small number of bars, is a quaint deception, on the burgher's part. The statistics should have been compiled dimensionally as well as numerically, before comparisons were drawn between Toronto and other towns.

The generally accepted idea concerning our city's critical powers is ludicrous. As far as I can make out, the rule here is to applaud everything, or criticize everything, so as to be credited with an opinion. People flocked to see Grace George play in an abominable farce; they fought in order to see Mantell play Othello with Shakespeare's plays; and they dropped in casually and applauded the reputation of Ethel Barrymore—whom Toronto criticizes in its own famous way.

Then as to music, a full house recently applauded Eva Mylott sympathetically, and sent the poor lady away (perhaps to some critical town), with the idea that she can sing. It is unjust.

A well-known actor showed the amount of respect in which our critical ability is held, when he said, in a curtain speech: 'I assure you, we actors are always glad to see you again,—always glad to be back before our old friends in Buffalo—I mean Detroit—I should say—er—Toronto!'



THE HABITUAL.

To, the poor Low-brow! whose untutored mind will soon be shocked by the fearful fate that awaits him. Soon will he be called for the pleasures of idleness to the stem realities of the spring term. Perhaps, then, some allusion to the article indicated above may not now be out of place, for even the Varsity might well contain something of serious value. Perhaps college life itself would be rather dull without any intellect lying about. Who knows?

The subject of our discourse distinctly resembles mustard, a condiment pleasing when taken with discretion, but decidedly overwhelming in large and unexpected doses. Those who are not here for the first time will not need to be told that a very little will go a long way if necessary; although our more experienced freshmen may declare that it often takes some time to get there.

The Habitual High-brow has hitherto been a bit lonely, but expects to see others engaged in hot pursuit of knowledge before long. He would fain confer some slight benefit on his less fortunate fellow creatures, and accordingly hastens to present a little intellectual edification in order that those who have so long defied the subtle call of intellect need not tremble too much when they meet her armed with the lash, and clad in despotism.

BOOK REVIEW

"THE SINGER OF THE KOOTENAY"

Robert E. Knowles, the preacher author who follows in the footsteps of Ralph Connor, or tries to, has published through the Fleming H. Revell Co. of Toronto, another novel. "The Singer of the Kootenay." In the book he takes the reader into the Western field of missionary work, which field the Presbyterian Church in Canada has given much attention to of late years.

The story principally concerns a young man who has been expelled from Queens University for a very mild prank that does not fit the punishment. He goes forth to the West to seek his fortune, the author spending considerable time in trying to persuade the reader that he is very wild whereas the reader conclusively concludes that he has no past, and, as regards conduct, is indeed superior to many, if not the majority, of young men in the same class.

Murray McLean, with his poor widowed mother's last dollar in his pocket and out to seek his fortune and with such a "wild" past actually refuses a position of singer at evangelistic meetings for a wage of \$20 or \$25 per week, on principle, offered to him by the Rev. Mr. Armitage Seymour, who has in view the same destination as our hero. While the evangelist falls down on his work Murray McLean finds his true self, becomes a wonderful evangelist and teaches the Reverent gentlemen a great lesson in his own line, making great use of his fine voice.

There is the usual heroine and everything ends quite happily in spite of the villain and some other mischievous spirits.

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At first the reader questions himself as to the possibilities of the author never having been near the West, especially when the author permits one of his characters to state that Frank is in B.C. However, interest leads us on.
To send a man such as the Rev. Armitage Seymour, whose very name, as James L. Hughes might say, bespeaks ignorance and failure, rather reflects on the church he is intended to represent. Full advantage has certainly not been taken of the possibilities of evangelism, while the description of some of the conditions must have been specially prepared for the author, for they are surely too boldly realistic for the ordinary minister to describe.
Many of the characters have been poorly drawn. For instance, the heroine is a beautiful girl in both appearance and character, while her mother is a shrewish and really wicked pleasure-seeking woman, such a character as could never bring up our heroine. The villain, an apparently

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well-connected Englishman, who, at the mere mention of his titled friends arouses the keenest of keen admiration in the wicked mother, is not well depicted and shows a lack of broad study of character and human nature.
However, in spite of the shortcomings, the book is interesting and certainly holds the attention of the reader to the end.

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The College is a Government institution, designed primarily for the purpose of giving instruction in all branches of military science to cadets and officers of the Canadian Militia. In fact it corresponds to Woolwich and Sandhurst.
The Commandant and military instructors are all officers on the active list of the Imperial army, lent for the purpose, and there is in addition a complete staff of professors for the civil subjects which form such an important part of the College course. Medical attendance is also provided.
Whilst the College is organized on a strictly military basis the cadets receive a practical and scientific training in subjects essential to a sound modern education.
The course includes a thorough grounding in Mathematics, Civil Engineering, Surveying, Physics, Chemistry, French and English.
The strict discipline maintained at the College is one of the most valuable features of the course, and, in addition, the constant practice of gymnastics, drills, and outdoor exercises of all kinds, ensures health and excellent physical condition.
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The length of the course is three years, in three terms of 9 1/2 months each.
The total cost of the course, including board, uniform, instructional material, and all extras, is about \$800.
The annual competitive examination for admission to the College, takes place in May of each year, at the headquarters of the several military districts.
For full particulars regarding this examination and for any other information, application should be made to the Secretary of the Militia Council, Ottawa, Ont.; or to the Commandant, Royal Military College, Kingston, Ont.
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