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Editorials.

QUEEN'S is to be congratulated upon having so far escaped the affliction of Greek-letter societies and other disorders of a similar kind. Up to the present the University has been distinctively democratic in ideas and ideals; and it is in the democratic spirit that much of our strength lies.

The Greek-letter societies have been variously regarded as harmless fads, childish crazes, innocent expressions of the universal gregarious instinct. There are no doubt elements of truth in such estimates, but recent developments show that any of the organizations ranging between Alpha and Omega may exert an injurious influence upon the strength and spirit of a university. These societies are usually constituted on the principle that their members represent the beginning and end of all excellence and worth and that this superiority carries with it the right of a monopoly of all privileges and favours that may be going. We therefore find the elect gathering under the aegis of the Greek

letter, and hatching schemes for dominating the life of the institution to which they belong; while the *hoi polloi*, stupid, plebeian, and unorganized, are taxed in various ways to provide sugar-plums for the delectation of these choice spirits.

The influence of such cliques is everywhere deleterious. By means of close organization and skilful wire-pulling they usually succeed in placing their nominees in all positions of honour and importance, and the result is a narrowing of the range for the selection of strong and capable men. The societies, we may charitably suppose, proceed on the assumption that all the strongest and most capable students are to be found in their company; but they do not see themselves as others see them or as they really are. Their membership probably does not include the best administrators or representatives at college functions; the best debaters and athletes; the best hockey-ists and rugby-players. What follows is a falling off in efficiency, and after a time everyone wonders what has gone wrong with the university. Those who are familiar with the working of the cliques do not hesitate to attribute nervelessness and inefficiency to the cheap and tawdry exclusiveness imported by the Alpha, Beta, Gamma follies.

The only aristocracy that is tolerable in college or out of it is the aristocracy of mind and character, and even this should not be an organized aristocracy. Competition must be open, free and honest, affording opportunities for all alike; for only under such a condition can we hope to develop strength and excellence or any other quality of permanent benefit to student life.