

THE LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY.

We are all of us too prone to treat things superficially, to lose sight of realities and take up with shams. This thought naturally occurs to any one who has sat out a few of the late meetings of our college debating society. All idea of the original purpose of this institution seems to have been lost. Yet the name which it bears, the Literary and Scientific Society, would seem to show that it was intended in some remote past to concern itself with the consideration of questions of literary and scientific interest. The mistake of our predecessors, however, consisted in their inability to forecast coming events. Sharing the simple innocence of those forgotten times, they ridiculously imagined that the discussion of literary and scientific questions would prove as interesting to their more enlightened successors as to themselves. But let us not be unjust to our forerunners. Rude workmen as they were, they yet left us a priceless heritage. They left us a constitution, which promises to be at no distant date—nay, which is now—the most perfect in the world. Macaulay boasted on several occasions of the unrivalled perfection of the British constitution; but let us not be hard upon Macaulay's errors. His chances were limited.

This constitution of ours is unquestionably our glory; but, perfect as it is, certain of our members, gifted with an almost superhuman faculty of discernment, see many opportunities for improving it. It has been decided that our weekly meetings be reported in the daily papers. This to me is an everyway praiseworthy measure, because as our meetings are principally occupied with the discussion of our constitution, reports of these various meetings would diffuse among mankind a knowledge of the most perfect system of laws in existence. What glorious results may thus be brought about who can tell? A long procession of distant ages may look back with reverence to this society of ours as to the dawn of all their wisdom. The great historical problems of the future may be to determine the respective effects upon human affairs of such momentous institutions and events as the French Revolution, the various socialist societies, and the Literary and Scientific Society of University College, Toronto. The heroes and patriots of those days will doubtless form themselves upon types, which are now in the flesh and dwelling among us.

But we must not let this generous and ennobling ardor carry us away. Let us cling to the main fact that an irrepressible legal genius animates a small section of our members. Regarded from the standpoint of the simple beings who founded the society, such genius would appear to merit instantaneous suppression. But consider what a quickening and stimulating influence lengthy discussions on the duties of the house committee and the lending out of magazines will have upon our minds! The subtlety of the serpent will become part of our nature. In such discussions what finessing and strategy are met by finessing and strategy! What ingenious misconstructions are put upon the plainest matters! How members with nothing to say, and no ability to say it, rush

to the front and display their complete ignorance of their own relation to the universe.

To speak out plainly, it is felt by many, whose opinion is entitled to some consideration, that the society is being swept away from its legitimate and useful object by a seemingly fathomless influx of small talk. The rules of order were meant by the men of sense, who first put them forward, to facilitate debating, the end for which the society is supposed to exist. But a class of narrow, technical minds has since found its way in amongst us, which seems to consider an endless discussion of the constitution the chief end of the society. If that be indeed the case, the members can easily find better and more amusing and more instructive occupation by joining such an institution as the Toronto Reform association, where they will hear men of sense discourse on important problems from another point of view than that of intellectual babyhood. Several times already this year the debate, which is really the important part of the evening's programme, has been crowded out, the time being occupied with petty brawling over profoundly unimportant questions. A small portion of each evening, say an hour, should be set apart for these trifling constitutional matters; and then the important business should be at once proceeded with. The society was meant to be a training-school for debaters, not for pettifogging attorneys, and the sooner this fact is realized the better.

It may be said with lofty scorn by some one that the society is a very small thing, and that there is no need of getting into a rage about it. This is true; and human life itself is a small thing. But of all the useless things in a useless universe small, silly, flat talk is the most useless and provoking, and should be dealt summarily with. K.

TEN YEARS HENCE.

The suggestion of A. B. with regard to the undergrads of the fourth year making a pledge to join in a re-union ten years hence is one which, I think, should meet with the approval of all, and no doubt most of us will be much pleased, if a satisfactory agreement is entered into, for as A. B. says, it could not fail to be an event of very great interest considering the separation near at hand and the divergence of pursuits soon to be entered upon in the world's wide battle field, and in view of the fact that by that time our ideas and relations will have undergone what ten years of time can effect. With regard to the manner of celebrating the event there will be time to think that over. Instead of 'nunc est bibendum,' perhaps all will by that time think something graver more conducive to pleasure, for no doubt a ten years' cruise on the sea of life will not be without its gales which will tend to deepen the feeling of the reality and earnestness of life. The theologian and the scientist will be able to shake hands over the dispersion of the clouds which now obscure the vision of both, and congratulate one another over the discovery of the unity of all truth, theological or scientific—the physiologist and the philosopher will rejoice that a fuller view is had of the sympathy of 'senses and intellect'—the classic and the modern will have even a higher appreciation for the beauties of the inspiration of the muse, while

the mathematician's calculations will have struck the remotest star.

But no more 'chateaux en D'Espagne'—time will tell, and what it will say in ten years we want to hear. If the care and anxiety of life shall be part of our lot, let us for one evening drive dull care away by the recollection of the many past and pleasant memories of our earlier years, among which those passed in the precincts of University College have been the best and brightest of the past, and may prove to have been the happiest of our lives. Hoping all fourth year men will endorse the suggestion, I for one intend to be there.

C. D.

THE NEW APPARATUS ROOM.

As some of our readers, we judge, are not aware that such a thing exists in University College as an Apparatus Room, or, if aware of its existence, have no very definite idea of what the term implies, we offer here the following brief account of its life:—

On the removal of Professor Croft, some time ago, to the School of Practical Science, the old laboratory and adjoining rooms in which he was wont to lie encamped in days gone by, were transferred to Professor Loudon, to serve as a future store-house for the apparatus which was then on its way from Paris. Accordingly the rooms were completely overhauled, new skylights put in, and the old staircase removed from the inside of the laboratory, the upper portion of the laboratory being now used as a dark chamber for optical experiments, and connected with the side stairs running from the hall.

The floors and walls have undergone a complete transformation, and now present quite a respectable appearance throughout, the walls having been thoroughly cleaned and whitened, and the floors smeared with shellac, giving them the appearance of polished oak.

The instruments have been obtained at a great cost from Monsieur Lutz, of Paris, the well-known optician, and are intended to illustrate the elementary laws of heat, light and sound. The instruments already out are chiefly acoustical, but the remainder are daily expected, and when they have arrived, will be located in the old west end reading room. The small rooms which Professor Croft used as private rooms are chiefly filled with instruments for showing the different ways in which sound can be produced; and the walls are hung with framed tables showing the construction of scales, and the comparative ranges of human voices.

The large room which formed the laboratory is filled with acoustical instruments, stored in glass cases, and kept in very fine condition. These acoustical instruments consist of sonometers, tuning-forks, etc., and form the most interesting part of the apparatus, and all who are the least inclined to exert themselves can easily understand the principles upon which they are constructed.

Much might be said of the other instruments, some of which are too complicated in character for ordinary mortals to comprehend, but we fancy our readers would rather be spared further description, and we therefore would advise them to go and observe for themselves.