

The Varsity

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THE CONVERSAZIONE.

 GAIN has come around to us the week of the Conversazione, that week of all the year of a transcending interest to the undergraduate, with social inclinations. This notable institution, for so long a time such a prominent feature with us, seems to have quite recovered that old-time vigor, which, with a great deal else, perished in the celebrated fire which afflicted us some seven years ago. After a period, during which the practice of holding such an event fell into desuetude, two years ago it was revived, and since then has, with the greater experience of those who have been annually placed in charge of its arrangements, and of those whose good fortune it has been to enjoy the splendid evening's entertainment which it affords, steadily grown in capable management and popular favor. From the information which the various committees for this year have already given forth to the public, no one can doubt that their efforts will result in a Conversat, far exceeding in its general results those of the last two years, and rivalling those brilliant affairs of a decade or more ago, which still linger in the memory of Toronto society, and which the present generation have so frequently been pointed to as evidencing that success which they should strive to attain.

The question has been often asked, of late, if we are not having too many events of this nature in University circles. We think that at least the query is justified. Considering the trouble which is entailed upon those who are given the task of looking after the various arrangements, and the general disturbance of the routine of every-day life, which the ordinary undergraduate experiences before and after such occasions, however enjoyable and beneficial they may be in moderation, there is certainly great danger in their being carried too far. There are, without doubt, certain needs in a person's nature, in an undergraduate no

less than an ordinary citizen of the world, to which such events minister. Poets have sung, and practical observers of human life have borne them out, that there is nothing half so sweet in life than the pleasures of youth, entered into with all the buoyancy of one's youthful nature. The man or woman to whom pure sentiment does not appeal, who is unable to enter into the pure enjoyment which contact with persons and things affords, is far from the realization of a complete and happy life. But here, as everywhere, the one great thing to be guarded against, is the habit of going to extremes. Our college life is not for the purpose of cultivating that less serious side of our nature, which appears on such occasions as conversazioni, class receptions, and the like. This is cultivated as well, perhaps better, outside our college halls.

Yet there is a different kind of social life, one which cannot be fostered so well in any other place we believe, as in a university, the lack of which is considered at length in an article which appears in another column. We can quite agree with most of the conclusions at which our contributor arrives in emphasizing the need of a closer contact of undergraduates with one another, and with the general professoriate body, in their life from day to day. It is this rather than the other, we think, that is most important to us just now, and the one that is in the most danger of being neglected.

As to what we may call the less serious kind of social life, that of which the conversazione is the chiefest evidence, we do not think that with the general conditions of university life remaining as they now are, it will ever need special fostering care, with respect to certain classes of undergraduates. The great danger will always be that it is thought too much of. With us we do not think that so far there is any room for complaint on this ground, though there may be in other universities. We have, on the other hand, in our midst a large number whose interest in such things might much increase to their own good. They are certainly as much to be blamed as those who go to the other extreme. But leaving such considerations aside, we think that there is a need of a word of warning, though not of reproof. The number and variety of our social affairs have, without doubt, been increasing in quite recent times. It will be to the true interests of the University if we see that the movement does not go too far.

But we hope that nothing which we have said in this connection will be taken as a reason for discouraging the Conversazione. There will always be room for one great social event in the college year, one occasion on which to throw open our doors to our friends among the outside public. Every smaller affair of the kind should always give place to this, in order that it may ever be worthy of the institution and the student body, which is responsible for it. There need be no fear that the enthusiasm for this will ever grow too great. This year we have the advantage of having at the head of affairs a most capable and enthusiastic committee, the members of which have spared no efforts in making the most complete preparations. The least that those, whom these have relieved from their share of the labor, the results of which will

We have been in business JUST FOUR MONTHS in Toronto, and it has come to this:—Ask any student where