

THE VARSITY

A Weekly Journal of Literature, University Thought and Events.

VOL. XI.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, OCTOBER 6, 1891.

No. 1.

Editorial Comments.



THE History of Journalism in the University of Toronto must be written in sections. It is long and interesting, but there are periods for which we have no files and gaps occur which

can be filled in only from the reminiscences of the older graduates. The history of the last ten years, however, is almost continuous.

On Oct. 7th, 1880, appeared the first number of THE VARSITY. It was published by a Joint Stock Company, the shares being held by the friends of the enterprise and editors appointed from time to time from among graduates and undergraduates.

The paper was well managed and ably edited, and received the hearty support of all the students of the College. Its literary articles were signed by men whose names are now the most familiar in Canadian Literature, and some of its leading editorials were penned by men who could write the sternest and most vigorous English that has ever influenced the undergraduates of this University.

At the end of the ninth year, however, the Joint Stock Company announced its intention of discontinuing the publication of the paper, and after a year's interval the paper was re-issued with the same name and form, but under a different management.

As it had been considered advisable that, even at the risk of lowering the standard of the paper, the management should be entrusted to the undergraduates themselves, the Directorate and Editorial Staff of last year were appointed by the Literary Society, and the financial standing of the paper was made secure by the support of the Society. The new arrangement proved a good one. The circulation was largely increased, the advertising columns were quickly filled, and many of those who received their first training in journalism on the VARSITY staff last year will long be grateful to the Editor-in-chief and the Business Manager, whose unsparing efforts made the paper such a success.

What the paper will be this year depends largely on the undergraduates themselves. If there are those among them who are honestly anxious to give college questions a full and fair discussion, and to advocate necessary reforms without timidity and without rashness; if there are those who have paid sufficient attention to University affairs to be able to give a thorough criticism of measures which are not in the best interests of the University—if our columns are filled by men like these, then the paper will have a reason for its existence, and the files of the paper will show where is the centre and what is the quality of the intellectual life of the undergraduates of the University.

Our financial prospects are bright—we can make the paper self-supporting—but this is the least, if not the lowest, of our aims. Unless our columns contain the best thoughts of the undergraduates and of those of the graduates

who are still interested in their University; unless the fact that this paper is published tends to give those thoughts centre and form and direction; unless we broaden and deepen the channel for the cramped current of undergraduate life, we have done nothing, and might better have been idle.

However, it is no longer a question whether we shall have a College Paper or not. A College Paper is now a necessity, and every annual increase in the number of students, every new federating College only seems to make that necessity more apparent, by weakening the links of friendly acquaintanceship which formerly bound student to student, and increasing the complexity of inter-collegiate relations.

The only question to be decided now is, whether the paper will be a good one or not—and the answer rests with the students. It is for them that the paper exists—for the discussion of their questions, the promotion of their interests, to quicken their life and thought, and to concentrate their influence. In all other respects independent—the paper will be entirely dependent on them. At present it has neither an ideal nor a policy nor a conviction. These must be shaped by the students. They will determine how high is to be its ideal, how true its policy, how intense its conviction; and as they decide well or ill they are making a choice for themselves or against them.

The students of the University felt an interest almost personal in the honor that was paid to their esteemed President by his former fellow-citizens of Edinburgh in conferring on him the freedom of their city. If there is a greater reward for good services than the ability to perform them it must be found in the sanction placed upon them by the generous approval of old-time associates.

Few, very few have "*bought golden opinions from all sorts of people.*" still fewer have had them thus goldenly expressed, and none have been able to make such a purchase except those who have grown rich in deserving.

We were sorry to see the graduates of last year leave the College. Of course the graduate connection of the paper will be greatly strengthened by their graduation, yet we are not sure that college life will be so interesting when the seniors of last year are gone. For Ninety-One was a strong year, one that held its own in every department of undergraduate life—one that showed on every occasion how strong was their public spirit, and the spirit of the year. Splendid fellows they were, and handsome withal, and our grief at their departure is doubled by the remembrance that some of them wore two gowns when they went away. And they have scattered to the four winds of Heaven; some we fear are in Ottawa and some we trust are in Texas, but the ripest richest cluster will be found down at the school of Pedagogy. Alas, Eheu! Or as the great poet expresses it,

Soon they'll sit on other logs
Teaching other little frogs.