

Society. Here are a few fundamental requisites of the highest success :

I. The Society must be considered as a means of real improvement ; not of amusement merely. To speak of the benefits to be derived from it is meaningless until the desire has become general to get out of it all the good there is in it.

II. While not all the singers can be expected to do wonders in their line, it is yet incumbent on every one to do his absolute best.

III. Readings should be literary ; fresh, if possible ; carefully chosen for interest and for style, and rendered, *after some study*, in the reader's best manner. Some of the numbers given this year under the heads of "music" and "reading" have been an insult to the intelligence of the Society.

IV. Of the essayists, nothing unfavourable can fairly be said ; they, at least, have made an honest attempt to do their work well. Better order during the reading, and greater attention to the subject-matter of the essays, are probably the chief reforms to be advocated under this head.

V. No debater, regularly, chosen by the Committee, should decline to speak for any reason short of absolute necessity. No debater, thus regularly chosen, should presume to address the Society without the most careful preparation which his time allows. Cases occurred this year, where one side, after much careful study of the subject, found that the other had cheerfully neglected the question altogether, and on the evening of the debate insulted its opponents with flippant fooleries. No member, thus acting, is doing any part of his duty to the Society.

VI. The Constitution was made for the Society, not the Society for the Constitution. Points of order should not be raised, except to enforce due order and discipline. To use the Laws or Rules of Order to burk discussion ; to worry a speaker ; or to collect fees, is to crush the life out of the Society.

VII. To sum up, let the Society be really *literary*. It is not a law school ; nor a training institute for practical politicians. Let nothing crowd out the literary programme. Let us return to our first love ; let us abandon practices which have destroyed in part the usefulness if not the interest of our meetings.

COMMUNICATIONS.

THE Editors are not responsible for the opinions of correspondents. No notice will be taken of unsigned contributions.

COLLEGE SOCIETIES.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—Some weeks ago I communicated with you on the topic of "College Societies," and you kindly inserted my letter ; and if the subject is of sufficient importance, surely a second letter from me now will not be rejected. My design in writing to you at first was to turn absorbed attention to our societies, and, advisedly leaving myself open to attack, I have found that the Literary Society at least has a champion. But while your late correspondent believes with me, that this society is "declining in efficiency and in literary character," he sees this effect from a different cause. In fact, sirs, we both regard the same ultimate state of affairs, but he, being near-sighted, is not able with exactness to discern the remote causatives. It is important to join issue, for if his words go unchallenged, they may gain currency with bad effect. There is only a limited amount of truth in what he says. Of course, with "Mutamur," I observe we have changed, *i.e.*, the composition of the student body has become altered, but because we have changed, we are not by any law of necessity coerced into changing our societies when they might be sufficient. I maintain they might be sufficient. Without looking at "Mutamur's" prognostications, he tells us that "adaptation is too cheap." What does he mean? Some even now grumble at the size of the fee ; indeed, very many have resorted to the two rival benefit organizations started every spring. The fact that we are having class societies does not indicate a substitute, but I think increases the necessity for a society-general. If the class societies take up the work of the Literary Society,—who would turn out once more each week to attend the latter? The tendency would be to a still

greater falling-off in membership and attendance. And the fact that there is now an almost absolute "specialization of studies" in the college (this is a college society, remember) only shows the need for the meetings of the Literary, where a chance may be offered to students to leave the close observatory of their peculiar labours, and with other men engage in general intercourse. But, sirs, if "Mutamur" will look a little more closely, he will see that the sole object of this society is not literary attainment, but also, what is supplied by no other institution, a chance association with men of other years. This your correspondent has never noticed, or has failed to attach the importance due. I maintain this is pre-eminently the best aim of our general society. Club organizations will afford an opportunity to see men of your own year, but will you undertake to say that the men of other years will often see you or you them? To plead such would be giving daylight to so much truculent bombast! I like the Literary Society ; I see a use for it far beyond what could be accomplished by any year organization ; and I hold my first ground that erring disinterestedness on the part of the student body will eventually cause its demise, for when men do not attend, how can it effect good? It is as futile as trying to "extract sunbeams from cucumbers." I look with regret on the utterance of the words of "Mutamur," which almost advocate the *sine die* adjournment of the meetings. Would it not be better to be conservative and disregard all radical sophisms which look to the disintegration of the student body? And, sirs, have our numbers become so unmanageable and interests so diversified that we have little in common? Despite the single handedness of my position, I yet hold that individual reformation among the students is the only thing that will keep us together in one body ; and I ridicule the idea of our being yet too large. I set down the disease of our club to another cause. If you don't understand me, look at other societies. Are their numbers too large? Yet they are affected by the same disease, be it what it will. Must we here resort to a splitting process? He speaks of the Literary Society (he could not use these arguments for other societies). I speak of all societies, would his arguments even "seem plausible" in reference to other societies—*analogous cases*.

But while he and I differ as to causes, I readily see he has observed a failing, and we will both do our best to remedy the ill. He may take his high-handed policy and strike at the head ; I would examine the roots and urge the individual. He may lop off the tops ; but I would encourage the roots to supply sap.

W. C. H.

THE LADIES IN THE LIBRARY.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—In my visit to the reading-rooms I have lately noticed some things which need explanation. It is well-known that owing to the large increase in the numbers of the ladies attending lectures the Common Room has proved too small to accommodate them, and that to obviate this difficulty the College authorities have placed at their disposal a few tables in the Library. Apparently this arrangement is quite satisfactory, especially to the ladies ; for besides being able to read to better advantage, they have splendid opportunities for using the librarians much in the same way as the men use the catalogues and, I may add, with more satisfactory results. But their privileges do not stop here. I have seen some of these young ladies going into the alcoves and handling the books there. Nay, more ; they may be seen outside handling even the books in common use.

Have some of the ladies been appointed assistant librarians? If so, why do they not attend to their duties and let us have books out from 9 until 5? Or has permission been granted them to do as they please in the Library while the men cannot so much as get beyond the barriers? If so, then it is most unjust ; for we have among us a small number of undergraduates who have special privileges. It is just possible that, abusing the privileges actually granted to them, "they arrogate unto themselves" the right to use the Library as if it were open to all undergraduates. If this be the case, besides being a very unladylike proceeding, it is both insulting to the College authorities and unfair to the men ; for everybody well knows that immense advantages are to be derived from free access to the Library. The matter, I think, requires investigation.

S.P.Q.R.