

English students, French students, German students, American students do so, and students have done so regularly for some hundreds of years back. It is indeed idle to kick against the pricks.

There are some half dozen occasions during the academic year when Toronto students thus "let themselves loose." Of these perhaps Hallowe'en, the Hustle and the spring elections are the chief. It would have been good for some of those students who are nursing an unhealthy college spirit, and who turn up their supercilious noses at all such evidences of "boyishness" had they watched the outward and visible signs of great inward enjoyment in the faces of the learned professors who occupied the Faculty box last Saturday night.

Varsity extends its most hearty congratulations to the Intermediate and Junior Rugby teams.

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Varsity extends the glad hand of fellowship to *College Topics*, and wishes the paper and its promoters every possible success.

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A paragraph in last week's issue prompted some one to make the unkind remark that the "mouldy" character of Varsity's editorial page has been very evident this year.

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Mr. Birchard's letter in another column raises the whole question of whether it is the duty of a University to impart a general education, or to provide the student with some special means of winning a livelihood, if not a fortune.

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The promise of Mr. McGregor Young, the popular president of the Literary and Scientific Society, to offer a prize for the best "stump speaker," was not only very generous, but shows a most laudable effort to encourage what seems to be a lost art around Toronto University.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

EDITOR VARSITY:—

I have been somewhat surprised in reading a number of articles which have appeared in your columns during the past few weeks dealing with the proposed changes in Mineralogy and Geology. If I have read the articles aright, the substance seems to have been that men addicted to such vulgar pursuits as Mineralogy and Geology are entirely unfit to be mentioned in the same class as those gentlemen chiefly interested in the noble pursuits of Mathematics and Classics; but on account of the inherent value of these studies in themselves, they must be tolerated about the place, and their pet subjects even encouraged, if this can be done without serious inconvenience to anyone. Such a view, sir, shows the most profound ignorance of the fundamental ideas in connection with the study of science. That subject which either in a high degree develops the pure reason or æsthetical part of our nature, or adds largely to our general stock of information, thus broadening our conception of life and the world in which we live—that subject, it seems to me, is most worthy of our serious attention and study; and all this I contend is developed by a study of Natural Science in general and by Mineralogy

and Geology in particular, and that hence these subjects should have a prominent place on the curriculum of every university and must form a part of any liberal education.

In the study of crystallography, a department of mineralogy, we are dealing with one of the most mathematical and exact of the sciences. The examination of the various forms assumed by crystals requires the application of solid Geometry, universally acknowledged to be one of the most difficult departments of pure mathematics, and one which demands no small degree of mental power. Here again the æsthetical part of our nature is developed in the study of the wonderful symmetry and beauty of the infinite variety of forms exhibited, both by the crystals and minerals themselves. Surely the man for whom a diamond is nothing but a pretty stone, a crystal a plaything, and a fossil a piece of dirt, must give way to the scientist who understands their true nature and can read in them the history of ages, even though he may not have read doubtful stories from Aristophanes or love-sick plays in French. Then again the independence of thought and character developed in scientific pursuits more than compensates for any loss suffered from a neglect of the more literary subjects. One who is constantly looking to the views of Aristotle and Plato, and whose chief object is to learn the opinions of others, can never obtain that independent spirit so thoroughly acquired through the study of Natural Science.

For these reasons, and for many others which might be given, I hold that the educational value of Mineralogy and Geology is *not* "very low," but on the contrary very high, and that much more attention should be given them in our University as subjects of high intellectual discipline and of acknowledged practical worth. Subjects of "greater, deeper, truer importance" it is impossible to find. What subject can be of greater importance than that of the proper development of our mineral resources; what can be of deeper importance than the study of the geological formations of our country; and what subject can be of truer importance than science, which is truth *per se*?

In conclusion I would extend to you an invitation to pay a visit to this Department at your earliest convenience, in the hope that you may reconsider your decision that these subjects have received already too much prominence.

FRED. J. BIRCHARD.

IN FAR COREA.

Forty or fifty of the students met last Thursday afternoon to hear Dr. Harley Smith's talk on the mission work in Corea. The doctor's description of our missionary's work in that far-off land was deeply interesting, and his account of the customs and manner of life of the Coreans was entertaining and instructive. The boys were glad to see two of the professors there as well as some visitors from outside the college.

THE FACULTY BOX.

One of the eight boxes at the Princess Theatre last Saturday evening was occupied by members of the faculty. It was very tastily decorated with blue and white bunting, and as it was graced with the presence of some of the University's most distinguished professors, it naturally attracted a great deal of favorable comment.

The members of the Faculty who occupied it were Professors Maurice Hutton, Alfred Baker, Ramsay Wright, W. J. Alexander, J. F. McCurdy, Geo. M. Wrong and W. H. Fraser. One and all, they seemed to thoroughly enjoy the evening.