

THE 'VARSITY:

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF
EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY POLITICS AND EVENTS.

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SALUTATORY.

With this issue the 'Varsity enters on its fifth year. Those who have carried on the journal during past years know the sad story of adverse balances and constant indifference and even hostility. Happily these difficulties, we believe, are in great part past. The ability of the staff of previous years and their devotion to the work have resulted in the permanent establishment of a University review second to none of its kind, that yearly gains a most gratifying increase in circulation and influence. The stock of the Company has been most widely distributed, and the elected staff is therefore a thoroughly representative one. The important topics to be considered during the present year will make it a significant one in the history of the 'Varsity.

The formation of an Alumni Association that will give force and meaning to the agitation for the maintenance of the Provincial University and non-denominational education will be advocated.

In the Curriculum of the University important changes are suggested, far-reaching in their effects, and before adoption demanding thorough discussion.

Nor, after the occurrences of last year, should the appointment of examiners and the mode of conducting examinations be passed over without an effort to remedy existing abuses.

The adoption of co-education as the system of University College is a serious step in the matter of social progress. We are in a better position, perhaps, than any one else to judge of its success or failure. When sufficient time has elapsed to render possible a reasonable decision, careful observation will make our judgment of some worth. At any rate we shall not let *a priori* considerations or present opinions stand in the way of an impartial verdict on the matter.

The project of the consolidation of the Colleges, to which the various College Presidents have already made allusion, is of national importance. The various schemes suggested will be most carefully considered. The opinions of our own graduates will from time to time appear in our columns, and the importance of the subject demands that these discussions should be in the hands of all friends of our University.

The establishment of a journal that will be an authority to all on our University affairs, in which each of us will make known his literary work to all his fellows, that will bear the imprint of a thorough *esprit-de-corps*, which shall have a circulation sufficiently large to make financial failure impossible—this is what we dream of in the editorial sanctum.

This year we may make some advance towards the realization of this conception.

For assistance and encouragement in past years we thank all who have helped us with pen and money. Can we not count on the same help this year, for are we not all co-workers for *alma mater*?

THE PRIZE POEM.

As a general rule, it may be said that a prize poem carries on the face of it its own condemnation. A true poet cannot, even if he would, use his sacredest feelings merely for the gratification of vanity or with the hope of pecuniary reward. Much poetry of genuine merit has, of course, been produced under the pressure of poverty, but the writer has been able to choose his own line of activity, and consequently to use his own inner experience—the first essential of good poetry. Prize poems, however, are, for the most part, of hotbed growth; far-fetched allusions and metaphor and elaborate phraseology has to take the place of natural imagery and diction, and forced enthusiasm, of genuine poetic impulse. The writer who is true to his art will beware of this habit of working up enthusiasm over subjects in which he has no especial interest, as tending to an insincerity of character fatal to good artistic work.

Compared with subjects allotted for prize-poetry at an English university, we believe our own have been chosen with much greater regard to the calling forth of a freer poetic spirit. We believe that the abolition of set subjects would be conducive to the production of a better class of poetry, in so much as it would enable each one to write according to his natural genius.

We congratulate Mr. Stewart on his having gained the laurel for the year.

If he has not succeeded, a thing almost impossible in the circumstances, in writing a poem that will live, upon a subject with which he had no deep sympathy and of which he had no inner experience, he has at least written the promises of future success.

From "internal evidence" alone we would decide that "*The New World*" is Mr. Stewart's first effort of any magnitude. Like all young writers he readily falls into the use of customary adjectival phrases, "*wide, mysterious waste,*" "*dark blue sea,*" "*vine-clad Spain,*" "*stately ships,*" &c., and makes many unnecessary classical allusions: "*Aurora fair,*" "*Tithon,*" "*Tempe,*" and "*garden of Hesperides.*" In addition to these weaknesses, his sentences are often involved in construction and unmusical in their flow.

But with all this, there are lines in the poem that have the true poetic ring, that are the prophecy of greater success than the author has yet attained.

There is a clear conception in

"And darkness settled on the lonely sea,
Then whispered they with voices low and sad
"Will they return to vine-clad Spain, their home
Or perish in some far-off clime?"

And a musical repetition of the rythm, after several lines,

"And thought of home and friends and vine-clad Spain."

Much meaning, too, is compressed in the line—

"There is no land beyond

Our home is far away."

Reminding one of the close of the *Lotus-Eaters*—

"Our island home

Is far across the wave; we will no longer roam."

A beautiful picture is suggested in

"And over

"The restless sea stole silver smiles,"