

England is losing her place in Oxford. But I really believe all has been for the best, even so far as the Church of England is concerned.

Certainly the Church did not make full and proper use of the advantages entrusted to her, and I must confess that some of the relics of Church government still in force are not the best features of Oxford. The Chaplain Fellows, who conduct the daily services in the college chapels, are not very often such a power for good in the Church as they might be. On the contrary, some of them are rather a scandal than otherwise, and might well be selected as good examples of utter idleness and torpor. Yet let no one fancy that the religious life of Oxford is on the wane. It never had greater vitality. Fortunately religious fervour and earnestness do not depend for their motive power on human institutions.

Oxford still has certain of her old mediæval garments clinging to her, which are allowed to remain, either out of deference to custom, or because they have not yet altogether lost their pristine use. Some of them, I ween, would commend themselves to the undergraduates of Toronto. For instance, Oxford undergraduates are not amenable to the jurisdiction of an ordinary magistrate, and may not be haled into a common police-court. All complaints against undergraduates have to be laid before the Vice-Chancellor's court, who dispenses the law in person, and metes out punishment to the refractory. Perhaps the independent students of Toronto would hardly be as pleased with another old custom still in force. Regularly after nightfall the Proctor sallies forth attended by several "bull-dogs," as his satellites are called. Then woe betide the undergraduate who is found in a billiard room after 9 p.m., or worse still, in a house of more questionable character. It is even against the statute to be out after dark without cap and gown. If, in the course of his rambles, the Proctor meets an offending student, with a polite bow, and lifting his hat according to regulation, the university dignitary invites the luckless student to call upon him next morning. The Proctor has the power of inflicting fines at his discretion, and can resort to rustication in the case of incorrigible and heinous offenders. An ordinary case of being in the streets at night without academic costume, provided there are no suspicious circumstances, is generally assessed at five shillings. Yet the rule of wearing cap and gown is by no means strictly enforced, and most men prefer to leave their academic encumbrances at home, and run the risk of the fine. There is also a system of espionage kept up under the proctor's auspices. Houses with an evil reputation are watched, and the frequenters thereof become marked men. The general stamp of men coming to the University has been much modified for the better. The system of open competitive scholarships, the rise of high schools to compete with the old public schools, the permission granted to undergraduate members of the University to reside in the town, without attaching themselves to any college, and other causes, have tended to bring quite a different set of men to Oxford.

Unattached students, for the most part, are men who cannot afford the extra expense which is entailed by joining a college. All the colleges require their undergraduate members to be in residence for three years, though special license is granted in individual cases. Keble College will not allow any of its members to live in lodgings in the town. And this certainly is a wise provision, for the advantages of social intercourse with tutors and fellow-students are not to be despised. Indeed the lack of this seems to be the only drawback in the case of unattached students.

Just lately a new idea has been started, which will probably occasion another influx of students to Oxford.

The Roman Catholics and the Congregationalists are talking of establishing their theological colleges in Oxford. The advantage to them would be very great, and ought to have been acted upon long ago. The Oxford system of having one University with a well-equipped professorial staff, and then a number of colleges grouped around it, seems to be far ahead of a number of small universities, each possessing the power to grant degrees, among whom the standard of excellence is very liable to depreciate; and therefore, the efforts now being made in Canada for University Federation are highly to be commended as a move in the right direction, and which, if carried out, are sure to benefit the country. In the Oxford of to-day, then, besides the still large class of men who have no object in life but to amuse themselves, there is an ever-increasing number of earnest and energetic men, who look forward to having to work for their living, and who really desire to make themselves intelligent. And among such a large body of men as we have here (about 2,500), you can always count on a few at least to take up any new idea, or go in for any scheme that is proposed. Clubs and societies abound, and though generally on a small scale, the best of them exhibit an amount of energy and vitality which is greatly to their credit. I may mention, as a case in point, that this last term two socialist clubs have been started in Oxford, one of them, the Marx Club, attacking the subject from a secular point of view, the other, a branch of the Guild of S. Matthew, approaching the question from a churchman's standpoint. Then there is the Union Society, open to all undergraduates, under whose auspices weekly debates are held during term.

To show that Oxford is not standing still, I need only mention some of the proposals made during the past twelvemonth, some of which have

already been carried, and others will no doubt be eventually acted upon. For instance, we have now practically got co-education. The undergraduates of the fair sex undergo the same honour examinations as their more hardy fellow-students of the other sex; they have their own colleges, and access to the open lectures of the University professors; and the only respect in which they appear to be slighted, is that the degree of B.A. is not conferred upon them. We have not reached the development of the American colleges, so that there might be free intercourse between undergraduates of the two sexes. At present there is a mutual holding aloof. The excitement in convocation over the passing of the statute to admit women to the honour examinations, was said to have been unparalleled in the history of the University. Only lately, too, the extreme anti-vivisectionist party were defeated in an attempt, in which they put forth all their strength, to tie the hands of the professor of anatomy. And it was only the other day, that a bold proposal to do away with classics altogether, in the case of natural science men after their first examination, was lost by two or three votes. I need hardly say anything about athletic sports—at Oxford they are cultivated as near to perfection as possible. On the whole, boating is the most popular form of athletics, and it is the only sport which is kept up all the year round. Although in England we have most disagreeable winters, with drizzling rains and chill east winds (which to my mind are unutterably worse than our glorious Canadian winters, crisp and bright), yet the river very rarely freezes, and so we get uninterrupted boating facilities. But heigho! time is up. I must get back to my weary grind again. My best wishes are with you, dear VARSITY, and your Alma Mater. Long may you both flourish to the credit of our young country. And I cannot forbear expressing a word of sympathy with our gallant lads in the North-West. How my heart did jump when I heard the Q. O. R. were off on active service! They are not merely shooting half-breeds and Indians, let us hope, but firmly welding the bonds of our promising young Dominion.

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OUR PARIS LETTER.

IT should be better known that the French are a meditative people—not indeed after the manner of the Germans, solitary, isolated within their own brains, hunting their separate and individual thoughts, and defended in their preserve by an impenetrable, foggy, circumvallating region of tobacco-smoke—not so, but in company, in communion. The French meditate socially, sympathetically, co-operatively, so to speak. So foreign is this to the habits of Englishmen that we have some difficulty at first in conceiving what the thing can mean, and I suspect our slander of the French as unreflecting is due to this very fact. What grounds are there for this new opinion? I give just the little that is necessary from the rich store of facts which any pedestrian might soon gather in the streets of Paris. The reasoning will suggest itself, and then comes all the pleasure of having better opinions of people than we had before. The giddy, unreflecting, will-o'-the-wisp Frenchman will give place to a pensive, nay, obstinately meditative character, and contempt will give place to genuine admiration.

One day last winter I was witness of a curious scene, which, as it gave occasion to the above reflections, I shall describe first. The afternoon (Sunday) was fine, and I took a stroll in the Champs Elysée to see if anybody was a-stirring in those spacious promenades this winter day. Yes, nurses were there with children, citizens and citizenesses were there in large numbers. The groups were many, varied and interesting. I was just proposing to myself the question as to how man stood as compared with other animals in the matter of amusing himself. It seems probable that he would have to stand below the monkey, at any rate, after the kitten next, perhaps. It is to be regretted that this valuable suggestion did not come to the minds of the Middle Age disputants; for not only should we have had new and subtle divisions of the animal kingdom, but the interminable discussion about the nature of humour would have been settled long ago by those famous logicians. However, deferring for the present a subject of such discouraging intricacy, I turn to a large group ahead, gathered dense about a large pond. Full of anticipation of seeing some Parisian fancy skating, I scrudge and elbow my way to a front place, and come upon the following scene: in the centre of the pond, under the gaze of over 200 people, is a solitary ragamuffin. This ragamuffin is amusing himself after his kind, sliding up and down, legs and arms spread out like the letter X, sliding up and down in his wooden clogs, a picture of ragged contentment. And that is all there is to see. Not a little disgusted, I turn to go away, when the thought struck me to see if the 200 were not disgusted too. Perhaps they were waiting to catch the little Sabbath-breaker when he came to shore, and wreak their disappointment on him. In that case I would wait too. But look round on those 200 faces; are they disappointed? Not the slightest evidence of it. Every one the picture of satisfaction and mobile with pleasing, changing thought. I look back to the boy and then again to the crowd, puzzled. The moving boy, the thoughtful circle of faces, crowding together, peeping over shoulders, all eager—it's