

"STATE AID" vs. PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

To the Editor of THE VARSITY:

Our name is Johann Van Winkle and we have the honor of being a descendant of the renowned old man Rip Van Winkle. We are not in the habit of throwing mud at the devoted head of our ancestor merely for pastime, but in justice to ourself we cannot refrain from joining with those who think the old gentleman was shamefully lazy. Indeed, we rejoice openly in the fact that the admixture of French and Saxon blood with that of our ancestor has changed almost beyond recognition the characteristics of the family. We are not prepared, however, to join in the merriment caused by the spectacle of the old man's bewilderment upon awaking from his long sleep. On the other hand he has our sincere sympathy and for reasons which will become evident.

We are a student of medicine, and sorrowfully we confess we are a none too-successful student of medicine at that. We are not brilliant, but we think we have a cerebrum of average size with a corresponding depth of sulci and a modest development of gray matter. We are a senior, and even at this early period of the session a "grim spectre" of next spring's examination haunts us at every turn. We endeavor to escape his hideous presence, but in vain. We walk the hospital, the spectre is with us. We try to read, he looks at us from the pages of our book. We call on a friend, the spectre glowers at us with eyes of fire. We attend lectures—at long intervals, we hunt for Koch's Bacillus, we try in every conceivable way to get rid of him but he is at our side, under our microscope or in some other place from which he persistently refuses to budge.

Now Mr. Editor, whereas our ancestor was "hen-pecked," you see we are "spectre-pecked." He became subject to the spell of Morpheus and we have been spectre-driven into an æsculapian spell. To our shame we have become so absorbed in our studies that through all this season of banqueting we have quietly pursued the dull rounds of our work and left merriment to those who are light of heart.

Alas! It is not twenty long years of sweet obliviousness, nor even twenty weeks of uninterrupted attention to our study of medicine. Ere long we are rudely roused from our spell by a great clamor. Our vessels throb, our brain reels from the shock of this sudden awaking. Soon our drowsy senses perceive that the noise proceeds from a would-be leader of men who is lustily delivering his harangue. Carefully we try to listen to what he says, but our torpid auditory sense can distinguish no word until at the end of a sentence come the words "state aid." Becoming more accustomed to the din we hear "vested rights." As the speaker proceeds we learn that he complains of being taken advantage of—ah! I beg his pardon, Mr. Editor, I mean that he is protesting against the abuse of the public trust whereby the people's money is flowing into channels unsuitable to him.

Suddenly our senses are all awakened by the astounding statement that "the University Medical Faculty must go!" Our prophet-agitator gives but a three years' lease of life to this ill-fated faculty! Upon hearing this we become frantic and in mad haste set out in search of some member of this doomed staff of medical martyrs. We picture them to ourself as pale, haggard, nervous beings on whose faces the "Hectic Flush" of their distemper points to the quickly-approaching end. We know that they are not perfect, and that though the practice of indiscriminate bleeding is out of date they do not hesitate to bleed us freely—not of the red blood-corpuscle but of the all-important red cent. Still we think they sometimes try to do their best in other directions as well, and we are horror-stricken at the thought of their untimely dissolution.

Our search is soon rewarded and our anxious eye beholds several professors in a group. Heavens! They are smiling and talking merrily. Upon their faces is no

look of wanness, no sign of dread. On all countenances are seen those looks of contentment and mature wisdom which characterize successful members of the medical profession. They soon disperse; one going calmly to give a clinic on his lately-devised and very successful treatment of Colles' Fracture; another to propound a new theory as to the origin of Epithelioma; a third to show his class how to stain and mount the bacillus Typhosis, and so on. Each man proceeds in his work with that coolness and deliberation which seems to say—more plainly than words can express it—"We are here to stay."

Back we rush to our agitator's stump, anxious to learn how we could have been so much mistaken, but we hear the same refrain. The fact is one or two new listeners have come upon the scene and he has begun his speech again.

The speaker is a man past middle life. He has a pseudo-earnest expression on his face as he begins his address to a straggling, semi-attentive audience, and the burden of his remarks is as aforesaid. As he proceeds he works himself into such a "fine frenzy" that he compels even unwilling ears to listen.

Seeing a tall, clever-looking stranger at our side we turn to him to ask some questions, and as we do so the cynical curve of his upper lip is lost in a pleasant smile, and we recognize an old school-mate who, after finishing a brilliant arts course at the University of Toronto, has been reading and travelling in Europe for two years. We seize our opportunity and our friend's button-hole and ask "who this agitator is?"

We are told that he is a well-known physician.

"What is wrong with him?"

"Oh! A mere nothing! He only wishes the Government to reverse its liberal policy in regard to medical education so that he may not lose money which he had the chance of saving but indignantly refused to try to save until too late."

Thinking our friend rather severe, we turn to the speaker and listen. We are impressed by his apparent devotion to the people's interests and hazard the question:

"But is he not seeking to protect the interests of the public?"

Civility is our friend's strong point, but this is too much for him. He turns to us with such a contemptuous glance that he chills us to the marrow of our bones, and makes each separate hair on our head stand erect.

"Where have you been all these years, you innocent?"

We tell him that the peculiarities of our ancestors have shown themselves markedly in us, and that we have only lately become aroused to what is going on around us. The recollection of a circumstance half-forgotten, seems to pass through our friend's mind, his expression changes and he apologizes very humbly—for him.

"Have you heard what this man has been saying, Johann?"

We tell him that we have heard most of it but, having given the matter discussed no consideration, we are not prepared to dispute the truth of this agitator's statements, though we are grieved to hear him denounce the existing state of affairs.

"I am surprised, Johann, that you or any other undergraduate, in arts or medicine, of the University of Toronto, should be unable to fully reply to all the arguments that this man brings against 'State aid' of any branch of Scientific Education. Previous to the establishment of the Medical Faculty of the University of Toronto, this man's eyes were strangely shut to the iniquity of state aid being given to Scientific Education in other branches, such as civil engineering, etc. But when the University begins to extend her field of usefulness to medicine, and when her efforts are being crowned with success, becomes before the public with the cry that 'vested rights' have been interfered with! He claims to take his stand on an 'impregnable principle of political economy, which asserts that the State is not justified in employing public moneys to produce an article (?) which experience has shown that