

THE ELECTION CONTEST.

PROBABLY no period of the college session is more pregnant with excitement and interest than the week intervening between the nominations and elections for the various offices in connection with the Alma Mater Society. This year has been no exception to the rule. The nominations were held on Saturday, November the 8th, when the following gentlemen were proposed :

- Hon. President—Rev. G. Milligan, B. A., Toronto.
- President—F. C. Heath, B. A. ; I. Wood, B. A.
- 1st Vice-President—E. Mundell.
- 2nd Vice-President—D. Robertson.
- Secretary—H. Wilson ; D. Cunningham.
- Assistant Secretary—J. D. Minnes ; H. Leask.
- Treasurer—F. J. Kirk ; E. J. Griffin.
- Committee—L. Irving, E. McLaughlin, H. McFarlane, A. G. Hay, C. B. Dupuis.

During the week mass meetings were held in both colleges, at which the various candidates put forward their claims for the offices, some on account of long and faithful services, others because they were freshmen, and others again because they intended studying medicine. From the fact that Mr. Heath is now a student in the Royal College, and his opponent, Mr. Wood, was chosen by the Arts, it is not to be wondered at that the old cry of Arts *versus* Medicine was again stirred up. This circumstance is pernicious in itself, and one that will result in injury to the Alma Mater if not to the University. Candidates should be chosen and elected, not because they are students in Arts or Medicine, but because of their qualifications; and certainly men should be chosen who have given evidence in the past that, if elected, they will faithfully discharge the duties incumbent on them. The elections were held in Ontario Hall. The liveliest interest was manifested by all; and as the hourly returns were posted up, the result was loudly cheered. At the close of the pole the vote stood thus :

- Hon. President—Rev. G. M. Milligan, B. A.
- President—F. C. Heath, B. A.
- First Vice—D. E. Mundell, B. A.
- Second Vice—D. M. Robertson.
- Secretary—D. Cunningham.
- Assistant Secretary—J. Minnes.
- Treasurer—J. Kirk.
- Critic—J. J. Ashton.
- Committee—Messrs. E. McLaughlin, L. Irving and A. G. Hay.

A STUDENTS' HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MR. LANGDON WILLIAMS, of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Ind., sends the following to the editor of the *Nation* :

Would you allow me some of your valuable space to call attention to an institution at the Johns Hopkins University, which I think deserves to be more generally known ?

The literary societies of our colleges are chiefly of two sorts—either devoted to the reading of essays and other

similar literary productions written by the students, or else consisting of formal debates on subjects of small general interest. Societies of both these sorts have been tried at the Johns Hopkins University, all commencing most promisingly, but invariably dying a natural death within a few months. Interest flagged after the first few meetings, while the students had too much to do to spend time in preparing essays or reading up for fixed topics of debate.

Last year, however, at the suggestion of one of the Fellows in History, a new departure was made. At a mass meeting the students decided to establish a deliberative assembly, resembling as much as possible the English House of Commons. The proposer of the scheme prepared the draft of a constitution, on the model of one he had seen working at another college, which was adopted, with some few alterations, by the students. The Hopkins House of Commons was incorporated. The officers were to be as follows : 1, A speaker elected twice a year, who was to have all the duties of the same officer in the English House of Commons, and, besides, the executive power of appointing the prime minister; 2, a prime minister, who was always to belong to the majority of the house; 3, a foreign secretary and (4) a home secretary, who were to assist the prime minister in deliberation and debate—the two secretaries being appointed by the prime minister. The speaker was also to appoint a sergeant-at-arms for the preservation of order, and a clerk to note the proceedings.

With this working machinery bills are introduced and put through all the readings and forms of a deliberative assembly, and adopted or rejected according to the disposition of the house. The Opposition benches are, as a rule, almost as full as the ministerial seats, causing the rivalry to be very active and the interest unflagging. Meetings are held every Monday evening at 8 o'clock, and the house seldom adjourns before 11 p. m. The attendance is very large, often reaching twenty-five or thirty, while an excellent rule, that three successive absences shall be equivalent to a resignation, insures constant, consecutive attendance. The second year has opened with a membership almost doubled, which is not confined to undergraduate students alone, for the roll contains the names of a number of graduate students.

Here, then, is a students' society doing good work, familiarizing the members with the customs and rules of deliberative meetings, while at the same time interesting them in the social and political problems of the day, and preparing them to be good citizens and intelligent voters. Perhaps, if this letter is seen by members of literary societies of other colleges, it may prompt them to establish similar societies which will do equally good work.

The Hopkins House of Commons has always met with the most courteous support from the Faculty of the University, the president and professors encouraging the students to join, and frequently proposing subjects for debate.