

A CURIOUS UNIVERSITY CUSTOM.

OF ALL the curious customs of university students, from the duels of Germany to the cane rushes of the United States, there is none more marvelous than the annual election "scrap," as it is called, at Toronto University. Many distinguished people have sacrificed their rest for the express purpose of witnessing this unique struggle—including statesmen, authors, actors, and journalists, who have happened to be in Toronto on the night of "the scrap," and all are agreed that it is without parallel in the universities of the world. A glance at the accompanying illustration will convince the reader that the custom is an odd one.

Toronto students rather pride themselves on their turbulence. Almost every Hallowe'en they have a bout with their natural enemies, the police. But it is in March that the annual elections of the University Literary Society take place. For many years the students have been divided into two parties. To define the basis of division would be a hard task, but the division exists, and year after year, under changing party names, and with varying war-cries, the hostile camps fight it out in deadly combat. Student parties had their origin in the old days, when a large percentage of the students of Toronto University lived in residence. These were "the elect," the representatives of wealth and social influence; all other students were regarded as outside the sacred pale. And so two factions sprang up—the "inside" and the "outside" parties, they were called. Although the conditions of those days have changed entirely, the two parties have been perpetuated. Their names have been changed a dozen times, but some of the original characteristics of each still remain.

Before the annual election each party organizes what is facetiously called a "moral suasion" committee. All the biggest and strongest men in the party are placed on this committee. It is their duty, if possible, to take and keep possession of the door of the polling booth on election night, and to permit only friendly voters to enter. As there are always two such committees, the result is a fight for possession of the door. The struggle is good-natured, but it is terrific. Clothes

are ruthlessly torn to shreds, and the men then anoint themselves with vaseline to prevent their opponents from getting a good grip on arms and shoulders. As a rule, the struggle is kept up from 8 o'clock p.m., the hour of opening the poll, until after midnight, and sometimes it has raged all night. No one gets angry, although everyone is very much in earnest.

Needless to say, the result of the election depends largely on the comparative efficiency of the contending "moral suasion" committees. The accompanying photograph shows the combatants after the battle.

THOS. EDISON'S TICKER.

WHEN gold was sold as merchandise in Wall Street, New York, during the Civil War and immediately following it, the transmission of quotations to the offices of bankers and brokers was an important part of the business of the telegraph companies, and attempts had been made to send out these quotations by means of instruments. Edison's first practical work displaying his inventive genius was shown in his construction, soon after his arrival in New York, of a "ticker" which was the pioneer of the present stock indicator. When

the model machine was completed Mr. Edison offered to sell it to a syndicate of Wall Street men, and had nerved himself to ask \$5,000 for the right to use it. When, however, he was asked what he would take for the instrument his courage failed him and he said, instead, "What will you offer?" After consultation he was asked if he would accept \$40,000, and the amazed inventor stammered that the sum "would do."

While the necessary contracts were being drawn Mr. Edison became suspicious that something must be wrong, so that when the cheque was put in his hands he determined to cash it at once. Upon his reaching the bank the paying teller examined the cheque closely, and then said something to Mr. Edison which, owing to his deafness, he did not hear. The teller repeated his remark, and, as Mr. Edison still did not understand him, handed back his cheque. Mr. Edison was at last convinced that he had made a bad bargain, the Wall Street men having his signed contract and he only a worthless piece of paper. He says now that if any one had offered him a small sum of money for the cheque he would promptly have sold it.

On his returning to the office of the syndicate it was



explained to him that the teller had probably been insisting that he must be identified, and a clerk from the office was sent with him for that purpose. After he had been identified the paying teller asked him how much of the amount he wished in cash. Mr. Edison says that, as the money had been refused him once, he did not propose to take any further chances, so he replied, "I want it all." The teller then handed him a large number of packages of bills, and Mr. Edison filled first the inside pockets of his coat, then those on the outside, next the inside pockets of his overcoat, and then the outside pockets of the overcoat. Lastly, he wrapped the remaining parcels in a newspaper and carried the lot home.

This was his first real start as a successful inventor.

QUATRAIN.

IN a dumb world, we mortals, deaf and blind,
Grope through the mystery in hope to find
An Immortality, and, scorning life,
Waste it to leave an empty name behind.

—ALBERT PHELPS.