

## COLLEGE LIFE AT YALE.

T. C. DES BARRES, '89.



HERE are sixteen hundred and forty-five registered members of Yale University. This number includes students of the Graduate Courses of Yale College, of Sheffield Scientific School, and of the Divinity, Law, Medical and Art Schools. The students of the College, or the students in Arts, as you would call them in Toronto, number nearly eight hundred and fifty.

It is of these and their life that I will mainly speak. I shall speak of the facts and the impressions which they have made upon me under four heads, viz.: (1) Academic Life; (2) Social Life; (3) Athletic Life; (4) Religious Life.

*Academic Life:* The methods of work here are entirely different from those in vogue in Toronto. The college exercises consist almost wholly of recitations, for which worked in a manner not wholly unlike that followed in the lower forms of our High Schools. Men have their *lessons* to prepare for each day's exercises; they do not call this *reading*, but learning their lessons. In Toronto we used—and I suppose the custom is still the same—to look with pitying eyes upon any Freshman making use of such phraseology. As would be expected where so much importance is attached to each day's work, comparatively little stress is laid upon the semi-annual examinations. A man's *stand—rank* is the Toronto term—is much more dependent on the character of his recitations than upon the percentages which he makes at the examinations. This system seems to me to have both its strong and its weak points. It ensures steadier work throughout the entire college year for the average man than is secured by our system, and yet it is dangerous. It is liable to hamper a really brilliant man, or a man who, if not brilliant, has at least some love of learning for his sake. Both these classes are largely in the minority at every college. Very few of us possess sufficient powers of intellect to be styled brilliant, and fewer still while at college imbibe any real love of learning for its own sake. The system at Yale has another defect: it keeps a man so under tutors and governors that he does not breathe the same spirit of independence, as is inhaled by us in more northern latitudes. And yet this is not wholly an evil. Freedom is so often abused by college men that it is at least a question as to what extent it may safely be granted. My own opinion is that the true path is a *via media* between the extreme Conservatism of Yale and the extreme Liberalism of Toronto. The work here is not divided into *courses* and *Honor* and *Pass* subjects as in Toronto. The same entrance examination is required of all. It involves a greater facility in reading Latin and Greek than the average Toronto matriculant possesses, but does not cover the same number of subjects. The work in the first two years is the same for all. An uninitiated Canadian reading the University Catalogue might suppose it to be much more formidable than it really is. You might, for example, suppose that the required work in Mathematics and Physics was almost as much as that in the entire Honor Course in that Department in Toronto. But an examination into the actual work done in the Class-Room would convince you that characteristic vice of American College Catalogues. During the Junior year half the work required is the same for all students. For the other half a large number of options are open to the student. In the Senior Year nearly all the work is optional. Throughout the entire course each student has an average of three recitations a day.

The several libraries accessible to the students contain an aggregate of upwards of 200,000 volumes. The University Library is housed in a handsome new building costing something like \$120,000. In their library system Yale more closely resembles Toronto than Clark, according to

Mr. DeLury's account. I must confess that this conservatism in method never troubled me much in Toronto, and has caused me no sleepless nights in New Haven. Perhaps this is accounted for by my having no endowment of original research.

*Social Life:* The system of residence here is very different from that known in Toronto. Theoretically all students live in residence. As a matter of fact the dormitories are insufficient for the accommodation of a large number. The choice of rooms is determined by lot. Their rent per week varies all the way from fifty cents to eight dollars. Many men spend hundreds, some thousands of dollars in fitting these up. Three rooms—two bedrooms and a study—are generally allotted to two men. There is no general dining-hall as at Harvard. Men form themselves into eating-clubs, each with generally a membership of a dozen or so, and go to some student boarding-house, of which there are a great many in New Haven. Board is more expensive here than in Toronto, for two reasons: things are dearer and the standard of living higher. Accordingly table-board ranges from three to eight dollars a week. Wholesome plain board can generally be obtained for about five dollars. The system of residence adopted at Yale is, I think, preferable to one with a common refectory. It gives you a general intimacy with a large number of your fellow-students, and a particular acquaintance with those whom you may find especially congenial. It also avoids the noise which a large dining-hall—and especially a college one—necessitates.

There are at Yale a large number of fraternities, whose purpose is supposed to be mainly social. All these societies have their buildings. In most American Colleges these fraternities run cross-wise to the class divisions. But at Yale it is not so. With one exception each of the societies belongs to a particular class. Thus when a man is a Junior he may belong to one society; when he becomes a Senior, he practically leaves that and enters a new one, if he be fortunate enough to secure such an election. There is one society which is different from all the others. Membership of the Phi Beta Kappa society indicates scholarship. This society exists in all the leading American Colleges. A dozen or so—the number varies in different colleges—of the highest stand men are elected each year. All members are entitled to wear the society pin, which is a peculiarly-shaped gold watch-key. This key is highly valued at Yale, and not merely by the possessors of it.

The leading social event of the year is the Junior Promenade. This takes the place of our *Conversazione*. It is really nothing more nor less than a large college ball. Comparatively few gentlemen who are not members of the University are present. But ladies come from all over the country to attend it. The Promenade takes place in January each year. The night previous the annual concert is given by the College Glee Club; and for two nights following there are class germans. So for several days Yale is very gay. There is a Senior Promenade at the close of the college year in June, but it is, I believe, hardly as pretentious an affair.

On the first Monday evening of every month the President gives a reception in Dwight Hall, to which all members of the University are invited. Many of the professors' wives and daughters are present. A more or less pleasant time is passed according as you meet congenial people or not. Besides this the President gives Receptions at his house to each of the classes in turn.

(To be continued.)

The Freshmen at the University of California are all examined by an oculist.

Nearly thirteen thousand volumes have been offered already to the University of Toronto to replace the library recently destroyed by fire.—*Ex.* The number exceeds 27,000.—[ED. THE VARSITY.]