

THE ' VARSITY:

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF

EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY POLITICS AND EVENTS.

Vol. 2. No. 16.

February 3, 1882.

Price 5 cts.

THE MEETING OF CONVOCATION.

Once more after the lapse of a year has Convocation met; once more has the privilege of discussing University matters been exercised, and the efforts of a few enthusiasts have for a moment galvanized into activity the almost inanimate mass. What is the cause of the apathy and lack of interest in University matters which has so remarkably distinguished our graduates? It is incomprehensible to us. The subjects proposed for the consideration of the meeting were vitally important. They involved questions of organization, of executive management, of finance, and yet, out of all the graduates in Toronto, only enough could be got together to justify the holding of a meeting with the number required by law. There must be something wrong. Is it that while undergraduates little is done to teach them to have an affection for their college—a pride in their Alma Mater, and a spirit of camaraderie for one another? We fear that there has been in the past too much reason for this suspicion, and that here we have one cause for this undeniable lack of interest. Is it that the commercial spirit of the country is so strong that men of letters are ashamed of their acquirements? We are afraid that there is something in this reason. Is it true that time and again efforts have been made by a few zealous spirits to counteract such a disastrous state of things, and that as often as the attempt has been made it has been sneered at, laughed at, caballed against, and suffered to die from want of support by those in authority? We fear that this reception has been given too often to the well-meant attempts of those who desired better things. The issue presented before graduates is very clear. Do they desire that once they are entitled to add a couple of letters to their name, that from that moment they should drop their studies—forget the noble lessons which they learned in pursuing those studies—deprive themselves of wealth greater than riches can give—allow their college, for want of sympathy and material support, to lag behind in the line of advance in knowledge, when by judicious and well-directed united effort they could place that college well in the van of those noble institutions whose object it is to spread the light of knowledge over the darkened minds of men. What higher aims could be proposed? What course of action could be indicated more fitted to advance not only the mental but the material condition of their country? There is nothing so expensive as ignorance; there is nothing more valuable than knowledge.

We believe that those who press the claims of Convocation have these views, and we rejoice when we behold the signs of a determination on the part of graduates of the University to assert their rights to be heard in regard to her affairs. The meeting on Tuesday was conducted in a way which augurs well for the success of future meetings. If it be once understood that work is to be done—talk to be frowned down, while a fair chance is given for the expression of divergent views—and the battle is half won. The recommendations carried by the meeting were:—

1. An assertion of the right of the graduates and the public to know what is being done in the way of legislation on University matters. The original resolution moved on this point was too vague in its terms. The amendment carried was precise, and showed by its wording the real desire that exists on the part of the graduates, at all events, to be fully informed of what transpires at Senate meetings, without any attempt at interference with questions of discipline or management.

2. The increase of elective Senators from fifteen to eighteen—the election of six each year instead of three—the change of the term of office from five years to three. This vote is only a re-affirmance of what Convocation once before requested, and almost succeeded in getting carried. That it did not succeed is largely owing to its own supineness. Had there been the keen desire for the change, that there should have been, a proper committee would have been appointed to follow the matter up. But that was not done. A committee was appointed which neglected to press the recommendation, and after being embodied in the first reading of a Bill, probably for the very purpose of giving the supporters of the reform an opportunity of urging their views, in the second reading it was withdrawn, and no change was made. We are glad to see that this time the fault has been remedied, and a strong, well-chosen committee appointed to work the matter up. Possibly this time again there may be a failure to secure the reform, but we imagine that if the body of graduates once understand that such a moderate request has been twice baulked, no power in this Province will be able to resist their united action in its favour on another occasion. But we hope to see the Minister of Education and the Legislative Assembly pursue a course of liberal and enlightened acceptance of the deliberately expressed wish of graduates.

Other minor amendments were carried, valuable as accessories in working out a measure of reform.

The introduction of a discussion on the subject of the financial position of the University led to a disagreeable conflict of opinion. Upper Canada College has so many friends in Convocation that the proposal of a spoliation of that institution in favour even of the University, could not but lead to a breach of that harmony which should characterize such a body as Convocation. Moreover, it would be prudent for those who advance the idea of the spoliation of Upper Canada College to recollect that University College has plenty of enemies, and that *mutatis mutandis*, the arguments applicable in support of the plundering of Upper Canada College are also capable of being used in support of the despoiling of University College. We earnestly hope that whatever position graduates may be compelled to take as politicians, they will not forget that as graduates they should be very cautious before they proclaim any doctrine of the spoliation of any sister institution. To say nothing of the iniquity of such a proceeding, it is imprudent. The adjourned meeting is to be held on the eighth instant, at the same place, and it is hoped that there will be a full attendance, and a deliberate discussion of the best means for the assistance of the University. We will ourselves endeavor to discuss the subject at an early date.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO.

In a series of papers which I contributed to the 'Varsity a few weeks ago I endeavored to make clear all that is implied in