

CRITICISM.

At the present time university matters are receiving a good deal of attention in various quarters. The affairs of University College and of the University of Toronto have been up twice before the Ontario Legislature already this session; the question of university consolidation is still discussed in the press; and considerable interest is being already manifested in the coming election of three members to the University Senate.

This disposition to discuss these questions must be taken as a healthy sign; it shows that increased interest is being manifested in the University and College; and that more than ever they are regarded as the crown of our educational system. Nearly all of the critics profess to be or really are friendly to these institutions; what they wish to see, they say, is an extension of their usefulness. And to this end they are suggesting changes in the Senate, an increase of the endowment fund, and the like, devoting all their attention to the question of management. No one has called the standard of scholarship, maintained in either of these institutions, into question. The positions our graduates have taken in the country, and the rapidly increasing numbers who are flocking to the College and the University are the best of guarantees on this score.

THE UNIVERSITY SENATE.

Last Monday, Mr. Badgerow (East York), moved in the Ontario Assembly for a return of the expenditures of the University of Toronto and of University College, and of the amount and condition of the endowment fund of these institutions. This motion, as also another one by the same gentleman for a return of the minutes of the Senate for 1878-9, was carried. In speaking to the latter motion, Hon. Mr. Crooks, after alluding to the important place occupied by the University in our educational system, said the records of the Senate for 1877 and 1878 laid before the house last session must prove to any unprejudiced person that the functions of that body had been well performed. The hon. mover of this resolution was doing an injustice to gentlemen who performed an honorable service gratuitously by appearing in any way to raise a question against the manner of their performing it. Twenty-two meetings had been held, all of which had been largely attended, the Vice-Chancellor having been present at all but one. The proceedings as published showed the questions which had been raised, and the divisions proved the struggles between the different schools of thought. If there was any presumption that the Senate was doing anything inimical to the public, let it be exposed. So far as the principle of this motion was concerned, the Law Society was in exactly the same position as the Senate of the University, and there was no good reason to show why either of them should be looked upon as a common enemy. Within my charge, whatever it should keep the confidence not only of the members of the University, but of the whole people of Ontario. He had no objection to the resolution being referred to a committee, and he thought it would be better to refer it to a committee than to refer it to a committee. These gentlemen, in their position, might not be misunderstood.

THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION.

Much has been said and written on this vexed question, and the subject is by no means exhausted. The very reverse, indeed, is the truth, for it is becoming more and more complicated with the lapse of time.

That university consolidation, or one provincial degree-granting body would be a great boon to Canadian education few would deny, yet the difficulties besetting the attainment of such a change seems almost insuperable. On careful consideration, however, they are not. One of the first points that must be met and dealt with is, which university should remain and absorb the minor lights? Another and more difficult one is what is to be done with all the graduates from the suppressed institutions. No one would wish to be a graduate of that university which was, but is not.

The various new regulations adopted by different universities point not to consolidation but rather to self-preservation. It is true that Queen's and Cobourg have the same entrance examination as Toronto, yet this is evidently to secure a fair share of the students preparing for a college career, knowing well that the majority of high schools prepare for only one university, and that one Toronto. Nevertheless this is a good change, and one which should be made by all, as it certainly would improve high school teaching by commencing a uniform system.

One way of reaching an agreement is to have a provincial university, with free affiliation of all the colleges, and which would admit the graduates and undergraduates of the suppressed universities to a corresponding standing in the provincial one. This would certainly raise some to a higher stand than they might be entitled to; yet to attain a good reform some concessions might be required; and further, this could only be needed once, and so would not be a lasting source of trouble.

If ever such a change shall be effected, it must be very largely by the influence of graduates and undergraduates. Many advantages would accrue from such a change such as a higher status of degrees, uniformity in the system of education in the province throughout college as well as school, and greater stimulus to more efficient teaching, due to a hearty spirit of rivalry among the colleges. Important though these may appear they must be realized by extending certain privileges rather than by taking them away, by extending rather than by retrenching rights, and by concessions rather than by inroads.

Year by year it is becoming more difficult to establish a really provincial university as the number of graduates from each one now in existence increases. It is not yet impossible, however, and I hope to see its consummation. F.

FOR AULD LANG SYNE.

I gladly concur in the remarks made in the last two issues, concerning a re-union dinner of the present fourth year, ten years after graduation. It would be an object to which we would look forward with eager expectation. Why should we not? To meet again after such a lapse of time to bring to our remembrance old times and reminiscences of

the past, would undoubtedly be a pleasure to all. Arguments are not needed to prove that this would be an event in each of our lives, and I feel confident that 'our year' will respond with alacrity to the proposal. Next to the love and loyalty which binds us to our Alma Mater, should be a heartfelt regard for the Boys of '80.

'May their memories be ever green.'

Another thing which would tend to keep up and sustain through life the 'esprit de corps' of our year, would be for the whole fourth year to have their photos taken and exchange. These faces would bring pleasing incidents and college remembrances to mind when the originals are widely separated, and in after years, we may be able to point out the photos of certain celebrated judges, ministers, Q.C.'s and M.D.'s, etc., just as they appeared when they graduated with us in '80.

If thirty or forty can be found willing to acquiesce in this proposal, Messrs. Notman & Fraser will photograph them in their best style for a very reasonable sum. SINCERITAS.

READING ROOM CHARACTERS.

The men who sit in the north-east corner of the old reading-room with their feet on the steam pipes and Kant on their knees, are fourth year metaphysicians, sometimes called 'immortals.' They appear to be profoundly engaged in their task, that of sleeping. When not so engaged, they are 'discussing' after the manner of the park disputants. They deem it the correct thing to have disorganized attire, and it is quite common to see a green and a blue sock flowing down the sides of their boots.

The men who are hid behind 36 x 40 books, and whose faces when seen present a haggard appearance, are classicals also of the fourth year. They are struggling with epigraphy. They are said to die young.

The men who are counting the spots on the ceiling of the genus passmen. They are very numerous, wear good clothes and often display a large breastpin.

THE NATURAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION.

Notice is taken in the last issue of the limitation placed on the membership of this association. Almost every student in University College takes one examination in natural science, and if these were admitted the association would really become a rival of the Literary and Scientific Society. The college authorities, when their approval of its formation was asked, were particular to inquire whether it would interfere with the other society. I understand further, that the use of a room in the School of Science was granted on the understanding that the membership should be limited to those taking honors in natural science. Any member, however, may introduce a visitor, and those who come will be cordially welcomed.

I think that passmen as a rule are not reliable authorities on what they know nothing about; and last week had been seen it is probable that further search for the required animal would have been considered unnecessary. Some science men, however, are of the opinion that his great overbearing capabilities point to a still greater development of the members, as the members are always anxious to secure specimens, and it is assumed that if he presents himself the guards will pass him on to the laboratory.