

## THE VARSITY.

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TORONTO, March 4, 1903.

THE opening of the Legislature next week suggests the question of the influence of university graduates in public life. It has been too often the case that those whose ability and education entitle them to leadership, have neglected their duty to the State. The exigencies of present day politics are probably largely to blame for this, in keeping high-minded men out of a sphere where ward politicians are more likely to succeed. But the tabooing of all discussions of political questions in the societies of the University is to blame, too, in removing the possibility of a sane consideration of public questions. The result must be a lack of knowledge of political questions on the part of university men, and a consequent inability to influence public opinion. This is not as it should be. The position of a university graduate in any part of this country, whether he be a graduate in Medicine, Science, or Arts, a professional man, or a man in business, should entitle him to wield no small influence in the public opinion of his community. This is the class of men to whom the general public ought to look, to pass upon the statements and policies of those who are governing them. They should be the ones to detect the fallacy in reasoning, the sophistries, and the false hypotheses which the glib politicians put forth. It is not necessary that a man should be addressing meetings constantly, to exercise his influence. If it be known that men are in the community and taking an interest in affairs, who have thought of the subjects which are agitating the public, and past whose keen and logical reasoning it is impossible to thrust a false conclusion, public men would be ashamed to advance the incongruous and extravagant arguments which are now used to influence the public. Anyone who has listened to a debate in the local Legislature, will feel the reform which a critical audience of trained political economists would work.

To give university men the influence in public life for which their reasoning and thinking abilities fit them, the living public questions of the day should be discussed in the university literary and debating societies. Here, if anywhere, will a fair consideration of all sides of a question be given. Here, if

anywhere, will the weak spot be detected. The university student is, by nature, critical. This is what the university encourages. This faculty should be directed to the interest of the state.

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ON March 19, University College will celebrate its annual conversazione. This year this function will be more nearly what it was originally intended to be than it has been for some time. In recent years the dance has gradually risen to such importance that all other features have been neglected. This has worked harm in more than one way. In the first place the students have lost sight of the fact that they are the hosts during that evening. The original intention was that the conversat should give the students an opportunity of showing their appreciation of kindnesses shown to them, by inviting their friends to the University, the students' common home, and showing them the building and the work that is being done by the various departments. Not only is this a graceful act of courtesy on our part, but it brings a large number of people into personal relationship with the University and gives all our guests an individual interest in it. The University cannot have too many friends; she cannot have too many people who are personally ready and anxious to say a good word for her.

The preponderance of dancing in the entertainment of previous years has affected the results injuriously in two ways: First, it has tended naturally to keep away the students who do not indulge in this form of amusement, and has prevented them entertaining their friends at the University; secondly, it has kept away the prominent citizens, whose interest would lie in the exhibits of the University's work. The active interest and support of these men are of great importance.

It is regrettable that the conversat has been narrowed to a University College affair. The difficulties of arranging exhibits from the Faculties of Medicine and Applied Science, in a building other than their own, seem very great. But the desirability of such a thing is so apparent that we think an effort at least should be made to accomplish this in the near future. A combined demonstration of the aims, resources and work of the University of Toronto, in all its Faculties, would be an exceedingly impressive sight. Its advantage would be incalculable. The students of the other Faculties should feel assured that the control of the conversat, by the Arts students has not been arrogantly assumed by them, but has been simply the natural outcome of the separation of the Science from the Arts Faculty and the formation of a separate society by the former. It is pleasing to know that the Senate has already appointed a committee to arrange for a display of the whole University.

For the coming conversat a highly-interesting and varied programme is promised. Dr. Kendrick will illustrate the science of glass-blowing. Dr. Chant will give demonstrations of wireless telegraphy. Illustrated lectures on Greek and Italian art and French architecture, a programme by the Harmonic Club, and numerous exhibits of various kinds will be some of the attractions.