

# THE 'VARSITY:

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## THE PRESIDENCY.

The result of the ballot last Friday night gave Mr. GEORGE ACHESON, B.A., '80, a majority of thirty-seven votes. There were four hundred and eighty-five votes polled, over one hundred more than on any previous occasion. This would indicate that the canvassing must have been pretty thoroughly done. The voting lasted from shortly after eight till half-past two, and it was after three before the count had been finished. There seemed to be an unnecessary waste of time in polling the presidential vote, and those whose enthusiasm kept them till the last, saw daylight streaming in at the windows before it was decided who should be the councillors for the ensuing year. If a ballot paper such as is used at the provincial and Dominion elections were used, one having printed on it the names of all candidates for office, with room for a cross opposite, to indicate those voted for, much time could be saved, and the whole vote taken at once. A double railing should have been constructed just wide enough to admit one man at once, and the crowd made to pass in one direction through it. Such jamming and shoving as was indulged in the other night often brought one's limbs into danger. The minor offices went very much as the first had gone, and the whole result was a pretty clean sweep for the Acheson party. Many supporters of the Teefy party were graduates, who left before the minor elections came on, and it is natural that for this reason the vote of that party should have been weakened as time went on. The presidential majority, however, was larger than even the most sanguine of the Acheson party seemed to have hoped for. Before the results were made known, odds were freely offered on FATHER TEEFY, and a good deal of money changed hands. The election on the whole was a most orderly one, the only little departure from the straight road being the explosion of gunpowder by way of expressing enthusiasm. MR. ACHESON is to be congratulated on having won so hard fought a contest against one so far his elder in years, and so able a candidate for office as the Reverend FATHER TEEFY.

We are sorry indeed to admit that the question of religion was dragged into the election. The placards that made their appearance about the corridors of the college on the morning of election day could have been put there by one party only, and but by that part of it of which the rest might justly be ashamed. This fact unfortunately has found its way into the daily press. That religion was made a party cry is true, but how far it was used and to what extent it affected the result, it would be hard to say. We can only state, that those gentlemen who used the alternative of religions as a means of raising votes against the Catholic candidate, are without the thanks of, while they have merited the odium of their own party.

## PUBLIC SPEAKING AND THE LITERARY SOCIETY.

The recurrence of the election of the prize speakers of the year has again provided for us food for reflection. The method of selection is perhaps not wholly free from defect. But it would be impossible to eliminate from any contest where the choice depends on the votes of the majority, the thousand and one elements of personal friendship, animosity, dislike of peculiarities and the like, which are bound to enter into it. I am, however, I think, within the mark in saying that the decisions in the Literary Society have been as fair and unimpeachable as the decisions of similar tribunals, at any rate of the average jury. The position of prize speaker has always been esteemed an honourable one, and the members of the society are not likely to abuse their franchises in making their selection.

But with the exception of a few, to most of the members the function of the society in training for speaking in public is extremely narrow in its usefulness, which is further limited by the prejudices that are prone to retard the progress of men of the junior years. It is inherent in the constitution of a debating society with a large membership that its time should be taken up to a greater or less extent by a comparatively small number of its members, who certainly cannot be blamed for monopolizing the benefits which are so freely yielded to them by the majority. As an outcome of the difficulty, we have again had discussions on the well-worn subject of the comparative merits of open and closed debates, on which I do not propose entering. The General Committee have adopted the reasonable course of endeavouring, as far as possible, to combine the best features of both by striking a judicious mean—the only way of avoiding a question of considerable perplexity.

Every debating society is intended to represent in miniature a parliament, though it would be hard to find in the supposed model any proceedings similar to our set debates, or in those hurried and unconsidered discussions where it is open to all to speak. The great defect of such societies is that it is impossible to arouse interest either in the speakers or in the audience in debating wholly formal and lifeless subjects merely for the sake of debating them. The discussions on points of order and administration are the feature of a debating society that brings it nearest to its ideal of a national assembly. But these debates are too often allowed to degenerate into a mere desultory wrangle, and speedily become tedious and distasteful to the majority of the members. It may be yet in the remembrance of some, that the discussions in our society which above all have aroused the most interest and even enthusiasm, were on incidents connected with the administration of its affairs. But even on this field diffident members fail to come forward, and notwithstanding the conscientious care of the Programme Sub-Committee, hosts of our best undergraduates, after being members for three and four years, pass through the University without once even seconding a motion. Not a few of these gentlemen are training themselves for the ministry and the bar—professions wherein speaking ability is a *sine qua non*—and leave the Univer-