

The Varsity

Published weekly by the students of the University of Toronto. Annual subscription, One Dollar, payable strictly in advance. For advertising rates apply to the Business Manager. Address all communications for publication to the Editor-in-Chief, University College.

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TORONTO, February 5th, 1901.

THE UNDERGRADUATE CLUB

We are pleased to note that the theories in this matter widely circulated last fall, are being strongly substantiated. It was little suspected that the vague speculations of a magnificent undergraduate club would take such a definite and healthy form as they have. For this we must assign two causes. First, the idea itself is a laudable one and has received the almost unanimous support of the students, and in the second place, the committee appointed have taken action in a business-like and aggressive manner. It is gratifying to note that the support received since last fall has been more than the echoes of enthusiastic cheers. We hear of so many projects quickly undertaken and as quickly dropped, that perhaps some of us secretly fancied this was another such case. But when men of well-known financial and educational standing come forward and support it with voice and purse, we feel that there may be more involved than was at first apparent. The plans have been drawn up, the workmen are at work, subscriptions are coming in, steadily rolling the total up into the thousands, and now a grand concert is to be held to complete a sum which will provide for all details. No large undertaking can be accomplished except by expending much energy, and by overcoming many difficulties. There may be two sides to the question, but whatever our differences may be as to situation, details, etc., now that the plan has so far advanced let us all put our shoulder to the wheel and make it a complete success. The vigorous activity of the committee ought to be supplemented by the financial and moral support of every undergraduate, and we appeal to every year to do so, by reserving the 19th of February and several seats at Massey Hall. We complain of a lack of *esprit de corps*, of unity of college sentiment, of disorganization, and the many other ways the idea may be expressed, and many claim that we have not yet probed the cause. We believe that in the *University* there is no lack of this idea, which is expressed in so many different ways, and a splendid opportunity is offered to one and all to show it. We are to be weighed in the balance—

shall we be found wanting? It is not a crisis in the history of the University, but it is a serious phase. We have been ever ready to speak of poverty, of the need of a Residence, of the duty of rich men to the University of Ontario, and now we are supported actively and financially by the business men of Toronto. The money is forthcoming and we are to be tested whether the lack of it was the evil. If we fail to recognize their appreciation of our needs, it will mean that an end will be put to further appeals to them; if we make a complete success, we can proudly go to them again when we need their urgent assistance. It is not alone the welfare of the Club, but the welfare of future undertakings which is involved. Nothing succeeds like success, and we trust that it will be shown that the students have the energy and *esprit de corps*, if the needed material is supplied. Let every man give the matter his most serious consideration, and now that the opportunity is offered, let us show that we are one in the aim to support and build up our Alma Mater. We cannot appeal to the rich graduates and financiers till we show that we are worthy of their support. We have put our hand to the plow and nothing should stop us. The shoulders of the undergraduate body are broad enough and strong enough to support the weight laid upon them, and it but remains for them to square them, brace up and present a solid front to the outside world. The University expects every man to do his duty, and in the report of the concert we hope that the too often used phrase, "our usual hard luck," will not be required in the reporter's notes.

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We are in receipt of a most gratifying communication from John Mackay, a brilliant graduate of '99. He is completing at Glasgow his qualifications for the Presbyterian Church, and according to recent reports has entirely outshone his Scottish colleagues. He says in part, "I think a man who can hold his own in Toronto University can overcome anything they have a mind to put him at," and notes "the splendid superiority of old Varsity for undergraduate work over any university in the world. . . . A B.A. from Toronto University ranks equal in my estimation to the best degree in the country, Oxford or Cambridge not excepted, for actual preparation, for strong thinking and thorough study; and I am coming back to Canada to push the interests of my Alma Mater." Such an inspiring letter cannot fail to touch responsive chords in graduates and undergraduates, and throw a little cold water on theories of some who think that the University is at low water mark. Mr. Mackay has set an example worthy to be followed. His confidence in his Alma Mater has not been shaken even after visiting some of the best universities in the world, and a bevy of graduates of his stamp would do more for this institution than a multitude of abstract theorists.

He also makes reference to the supposed death of John Inkster, '98, and we publish in this number an interesting letter in that connection. Mr. Mackay promises to write at more length in the near future.