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→* The Sanctum. *←

THE recent animated political discussion in the Literary Society, a report of which appears in the present issue of the ATHENÆUM, naturally suggests an inquiry as to what extent the student can consistently and profitably make practical politics a subject of study during his college course. Against a critical examination of political theories independent of any particular time or country, or of their respective merits, as seen in their application to countries in the past, little objection is likely to be raised. Indeed, provision is made directly for the former in the textbooks on Political Economy, while indirectly in connection with various studies, the latter is continually coming up for review. But concerning the relations of the student to the political issues of the day, in many minds, quite a different opinion prevails. There is a strong tendency to class him with ministers and women, whom, as far as this question is concerned,

public opinion has always consigned to the limbo of ignorance. Though a representative of either of these classes, totally ignorant of politics, would be exceedingly flat if not absolutely blameworthy, it might be possible to adduce reasons why they should not enter the political lists; but that the student should take the same attitude cannot be supported. On the contrary it scarcely seems right to dignify with the name of student him who can content himself to live under the protection of and subject to laws in the making and execution of which he voluntarily refuses to participate. True, he is not in a position to wield much direct influence while at college; but in the light of the future the formative period of the opinions of its young men is one of the most important in the history of a country. By the time the Senior year is reached, the ordinary student will be, on the one hand, measureably free from the blind party prejudice which takes its cast invariably from the parental mould, and on the other, from the equally detestable partizanship which seems to be incident to active political life and regulated by office and lucre, and so will be likely to select the planks for his political platform according to the highest standard. Every student, therefore we take it, ought to interest himself in politics to the extent of being able to express himself with clearness on the leading questions of the day, as well as to obtain data from the present, in so far as that is possible, for the solution of the political problems of the future.

THE revival in the College, of a usage of some few years ago, that of granting a short holiday season in the middle of the five month's term from January to June, has naturally come about with the change in the terms of the present year. Five month's steady application to class work is certainly calculated to dampen the enthusiasm of any Professor, and to weary to some extent the most earnest student. It seems therefore, that this grant is a benefit to the Professors