

MODERN LANGUAGE CLUB.

A well-attended meeting of the Society was held on Monday afternoon, in Moss Hall, the President, Mr. T. A. Rowan, in the chair. The work was carried on entirely in French. Essays were read on the Life and Chief Works of Dumas Pere.

Mr. A. H. Young gave a good essay on the life and influence of Dumas, while Mr. J. E. Jones read an excellent paper on Monte Christo. Great progress in the method of reading the essays has been a marked feature in the programmes during the year. Mr. Jones then led the Society in singing some French songs, after which a very successful practice in conversation was carried on, Mr. Squair, Mr. Cameron, and Mr. Rouse encouraging. An exciting meeting is expected next Monday afternoon, when Modern Language interests in general will be discussed. Subjects bearing on the relation of History, Ethnology, etc., to Modern Languages will be discussed. Mr. Houston will also introduce the subject in its relation to the curriculum.

NATURAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION.

On Tuesday evening, the society met as usual in the School of Science, Prof. R. Ramsay Wright, in the chair. Dr. Ellis, Prof. Chapman and Prof. Wright, were appointed a committee to examine the essays sent in for the McMurrich medal. The programme was commenced by Mr. Clarke, with an elaborate and interesting paper on the Spermatogenesis of the rat. After some discussion of this essay, the President gave a short account of the nature and working of the German Universities.

MATHEMATICAL AND PHYSICAL SOCIETY.

The University College Mathematical and Physical Society held its usual meeting Tuesday evening, Feb. 16, in the Lecture-room, No. 8, the President, J. M. Clark, M.A., in the chair. Mr. Bowerman read an able paper on the "Study of Physics." After defining the term, and classifying the different subjects that come under the head of Physical Science, he showed the benefits derived from the training received in the pursuit of these studies, their adaptability to educate the logical faculties, to cultivate powers of observation, to promote executive skill, and to refine the senses of touch, sight and hearing, the latter acquired more particularly by the great number of indispensable experiments in the laboratory. He pointed out the great number of employments which the recent discoveries and advances in the knowledge of the different departments of science and its application in engineering, telegraphing, telephoning, photographing, electric lighting, etc., have opened to those only who have acquired a knowledge of these subjects.

After some discussion on the paper, Mr. W. J. Loudon, B.A., presented a number of experiments in electricity with instruments recently procured from Paris.

A paper received from Mr. J. C. Fields, B.A., of Johns Hopkins University, was laid over until the next meeting.

On motion of I. E. Martin, seconded by L. H. Bowerman, W. J. Loudon, B.A., Prof. Galbraith and the President were appointed to act as examiners for the Mathematical and Physical Society medal. Papers for competition have to be handed to the Secretary before the 15th of March.

Problems were laid over until next meeting.

Mr. J. C. Stuart will read a paper at the next meeting.

Communications.

THE NEW PROTESTANTISM.

To the Editor of the VARSITY:

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me a few words in the grave dis-

cussion which, advisedly or not, has been opened in your columns. The debate seems to centre round the one question as to the desirability of the system of denominational colleges as a means for the attainment of religious truth. It may easily be foreseen that the discussion will have a tendency to spread over into other well-known fields of religious polemics. But we earnestly hope that, first of all, this important preliminary question will be thoroughly argued, and serious, honest endeavour made to arrive at some agreement.

I shall waste no words in maintaining the all-importance to man of religious knowledge, of having clear conceptions of duty here and of the prospects and conditions of life hereafter, and finally of attaining to an ever better apprehension of the presence and attributes of his God. Light, certain light, on these matters is what we are crying for. All through history and the world over we have the piteous spectacle of warring religions and of blindly wandering and suffering humanity. Is this to continue? Are we adopting the best means of putting an end to it? Physical science is working hard and with single eye to make us better acquainted with many duties and their accomplishment, and with the grandeur of God and his works. Is religious science working thus hard and single-eyed? Are the hundreds who go forth to instruct us in religious truth trained to correct habits of thought, and are the institutions in which they are trained the best calculated to give them the highest possible conceptions of religious truth? To this double question the advocates of denominational religious training answer yea, and to it I beg to answer nay.

From the nature of the case and from the facts of the case it is not so.

For the attainment of truth two things are necessary—freedom from prejudice and the freest admission to all fields of information and discussion. Are these conditions realized in denominational colleges? I confess it seems to me that a "denominational college for the search after truth" is a contradiction in terms far greater than the "didactic poetry" against which DeQuincy inveighs. The very term denomination presumes certain truth arrived at and to be maintained; certain truth which it is the peculiar privilege of the institution to possess and to advocate.

We have here a disqualifying prejudice which it is vain to deny; and as for opportunities of securing full information and of benefitting by fair discussion, who will pretend that in the diversity and exclusiveness of denominational colleges any such prerequisites for the discovery of truth are to be found? Zeal in abundance, earnest enthusiasm, no doubt, and a certain restless activity within a limited sphere—but no thoroughly candid, fearless, soul-earnest search after truth.

The history of denominational colleges is unsavory and is not likely to be quoted in defence of their maintenance to-day. The time is past at Oxford and Cambridge when admission to the study of pure mathematics was conditioned by the signing of the articles. The attempt to regulate the acquisition of knowledge in the physical sciences has been abandoned, we may assume. But why is the acquisition of religious truth still so generally restricted? In proof that these conditions still exist, we have only to note the fear of one denomination of another.

What Presbyterian would be content to search for religious truth in an Episcopalian College? Why do they thus distrust each other? When one of your correspondents pleads in behalf of one denominational college, that "its very liberality and extent of theological area has been often a subject of reproach by those outside of her pale," is he not saving his own denomination by a condemnation of the others? I think we may safely leave to the mutual criticism of the colleges themselves the task of exposing the utter unsatisfactoriness of their methods of inquiry. Toronto University, with its meeting of the rival colleges, is most excellently situated for such a consensus of criticism. And here, let me say, is the promise of something better. In such mutual criticism have we not the suggestion of the ideal institution for re-