

Things Generally.

II.



THE Young Men's Christian Association of University College is a large institution. Whatever may have been our opinions as to the advisability of organizing it one thing is certain now—it has come to stay. Only the destruction of the University, or the destruction of Christianity, both rather improbable events, can bring it to an end. Down through the future, it may be for hundreds of years, it will be among us, exercising its influence upon generation after generation of students, and determining to a large extent the character of university life. It is therefore of the gravest importance that we should understand it and for the sake of reformation or encouragement criticize it adversely or favorably as we honestly think it deserves. Nothing among us should be above criticism, and I for one am longing for the time when we can speak out more freely and boldly what we think without being silenced as we are in many directions now by that cowardly truth-withering whisper "Hush! Hush! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ascalon."

Then, for our Y.M.C.A., what is its position among us? What good is it doing? Whither is it tending? One thing we may notice with mutual congratulation at the outset, the sneers that were made at the original members, when few in number, on the mistaken ground that they were setting themselves up as models of morality, have faded from the face of its opponents. Now the individual member is swallowed up in the numbers of the organization and all we see is the latter standing strongly and firmly, not with pretence of better morals, but as a great, earnest protest in favor of them as the outward expression of an inward yearning for a purer and a nobler life. This I take to be the great work of the Y.M.C.A. in its outward relations to the student world. I believe that so far it has done that work well; and I am sure that many who are not members of the organization will recognize its beneficent influence.

But there are two dangers to be avoided in any institution of its nature and in its situation. The first is the danger of forgetting its real work of influencing the hearts of men and aspiring to temporal power. Fortunately the wisdom of its managers has so far kept it free from all charge of endeavor to exercise a direct influence or control upon the course of undergraduate events. The second danger is that after expansion and elaboration there may grow up within stagnation and decay. I am eager to admit the great influence for good that the Y.M.C.A. has had upon our general life by discountenancing the breach of the common A, B, C rules of morality; but when I look within and enquire what influence it has upon its own members, how it helps *them* to go onward to the observation of finer rules, to the removal of less obvious stains, I confess that I am often gravely disappointed. We have many committees and associations announced in pencils red and blue; we have many secretaries, travelling, general, international, inter-collegiate, inter-provincial, and what not; we have many reports that never utter a discouraging word, for that would *never* do, even if the work has been most foolishly undertaken and cannot reasonably promise to succeed; but I do not know what good they do, what strength they bring to *each individual soul*. Indeed, I am afraid that the conditions are very unfavorable towards mutual improvement by the present methods. The Y.M.C.A. is composed of all sorts and conditions of men, and when a promiscuous crowd assembles to listen to an ordinary student, it is one chance in a hundred that he will strike a chord of sympathy in any breast. It needs the powers

of a master-mind to go deep into the nature of things and influence such a motley throng. You need not tell me they are one in Christ, for there are, as a matter of fact, various stages of belief, various mental temperaments, that can scarcely sympathize with and help each other. It is from the quiet communion of sympathetic friends in some private room that real assistance is derived, when those who do not understand each other at all, who are fresh from the many "obstinate questionings of invisible things" that arise in the lecture rooms of science and philosophy, some troubled one way and some another, when these meet in a public room and listen to the halting sentences of one who knows not the hearts of his audience, and perhaps could not help them if he did, what light do we receive, what strength is imparted to us? Could not some better system be devised on the basis of similar needs and similar temperaments? Or can any inner good be derived from system at all? Or am I wrong in supposing that no good is derived from the present one? After all, each man can only answer this last question for himself.

NUNQUAM NOSCENDUS.

MODERN LANGUAGE CLUB.

The first meeting of the club was held in the Y.M.C.A. Hall on Monday, the 19th inst., and was rather poorly attended. The meeting was a French one, having as a subject, "18th Century Sentimentalists."

Miss L. L. Jones read a very comprehensive essay on "Paul et Virginie," of Bernardin de St. Pierre. Miss Jones read with a distinctness that made it a pleasure to follow her. Miss Lye read a selection in French, and read it well, though somewhat fast. Mr. T. D. Dockray's essay treated of "Julie ou La Nouvelle Eloise." After the program the members spent some time in French conversation. This feature of the club is being neglected by most of the members of the club, especially in the lower years. It is to be hoped that the neglect will be only temporary.

In THE VARSITY'S report of the last meeting of last term there was a very important omission, and one for which we hasten to make amends. All those present will remember how Miss T. C. Robertson, of the second year, delighted them with her reading from Cable's "Bonaventure," and must have felt surprise at not noticing her name among those who took part at that very successful meeting. As the President said: "It is the misfortune of the club that Miss Robertson cannot be heard more frequently." The omission of Miss Robertson's name was one of those mistakes that occur once in the life of every reporter, and will be better appreciated by those having experience than by the public generally.

THE NATURAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION.

The postponed meeting of this Society took place in the Biological Department on Friday last; the second Vice-President, Mr. Thomas McCrae, in the chair.

A communication from Mr. F. T. Shutt, M.A., of Ottawa, was read, approving of the manner in which the Cawthorne medal was to be disposed, and congratulating the Society on its growth and prosperity.

Mr. A. F. Hunter, '91, read an excellent paper entitled "Cell division—direct and indirect." He reviewed the history, and gave a general survey of the Cell doctrine, and then went minutely into the processes of Cell division, calling special attention to the part played by the chromatin in the nucleus.

Mr. E. C. Jeffrey, B.A., spoke of the great difficulties scientists had to encounter in this study. He spoke also of the Physiological importance of chromatin, and referred to Dr. A. B. Macallum's discovery of the presence of iron therein which gives rise to the red pigment in the red blood corpuscles. The chairman thanked Mr. Hunter very heartily on behalf of the students, and the meeting then adjourned.