

# THE VARSITY

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## Editorial Comments.



CONVERSAZIONE for this year is a nonentity. Some of its chief advocates are greatly disappointed over the failure of their object, but taking all matters into consideration we deem it wise on the part of the trustees to give their decision as they did. For once we are in ac-

cord with the President's opinion. Still, we cannot condone his actions prior to giving his decision which led the prime movers on until the realization of their object seemed quite attainable. Conversations in the past have been gay affairs—brilliant and successful in the extreme—which fact warranted all the energies bestowed on the scheme by its chief advocates. The main argument against its being held this year was the unfitness of the main building, which, although sufficiently far advanced towards completion to be used for college purposes, is not in a suitable condition for such a grand society event. When the grand old building, whose architectural beauty is envied by all our sister institutions, is pronounced by the architect as complete in all its parts, then let us have such a grand re-opening as will outshine all former gala-days in the history of our college. Let us have a preëminently brilliant affair or none at all. We were divided on the question this year, we will be united next, and when the re-opening does take place there will be no half-hearted response from any body of students, but all will enter into the celebration with perfect unanimity. A great many have been dissatisfied with the decision of the trustees, but we would ask these to compound their interest for a similar event next year and make it truly a *red-letter day* in the history of the University of Toronto.

The lack of real progress made during the term in the department of mineralogy and geology has been of such a nature as to justify us in again bringing up the problem which has for so long vexed Faculty and students alike. For we are compelled to declare that full justice has been done neither to the course nor to those pursuing it, nor, in short, even to the instructors. We would not wish to impute to such a one as Prof. Chapman even the slightest hint of a lack of zeal; for every one, at all acquainted with his efforts in behalf of the department, must own them to have been most untiring and persevering.

Practical instruction has not been carried on to the extent required for a class making a specialty of such work: hardly even to the extent which was previously required of students in the Natural Science Course. Although lectures may be delivered, it is certain that the place of practical instruction cannot be filled by any other branch, however thorough, and most of all in a course which is expected to fit the student for a profession which shall be eminently practical.

But such practice is only attainable in a properly-

equipped laboratory—and such we have not. Much as we would like to see a commodious building, there is but little doubt that Professor and students would be content, in the absence of better, with the present cramped quarters, if properly or thoroughly equipped. But the equipment, if equipment it may be called, is wholly inadequate. If this is doubted, consider the subject of Assaying, which is, perhaps, as important as Practical Mineralogy to the student who expects to follow the profession of a Practical Mineralogist, who is likely to be engaged in mining work. Consider, then, what are the facilities provided for the teaching of this branch! Practically speaking, none.

To what circumstances, or to whom is the present condition of affairs due? Doubtless, partly to the present financial difficulties; but, perhaps, also to an unaccountable indifference on the part of the Senate to what seem to us to be just demands. When the late change was brought about, was it merely meant to relegate the department to continued obscurity for a year or two? Was it meant to silence Prof. Chapman's demands by apparent compliance? If it were so, it is difficult to say who will suffer more, Prof. Chapman and his students, or the University at large.

But in this we may do injustice to the intentions of the Senate; for to give them due credit, they have done nobly by some departments, notably that of Biology. While we heartily approve the advancement of this department, especially when we consider its close relations to the lately affiliated Toronto School of Medicine, we would like to see a proportional development in the two sister departments. We have been given to understand that suitable buildings are to be erected to meet the needs of the Chemical department. Such being done, we may well be proud of the efficiency of these branches; but our pride must stoop to own the present state of the Mineralogical department. If like intentions prevail in regard to the last named, we are sincerely glad of it; if not, we feel, as students of the University at large, a certain degree of indignation.

It may be urged and with some justice, that the cost of improvement such as we refer to, would be greater than the University could bear. But is not the status of the whole University dependant, to some extent, upon the excellence of individual departments; and if the standing of our College among sister Colleges is to be impaired by the deficiencies of any part, is it true economy to spare present expense to the detriment of future success?

Proper adjustment of the affairs of this department must be in the highest degree beneficial; not only by reason of intrinsic value, but also by the spirit of enthusiasm which would be created in the minds of instructors and instructed, who would feel, more than ever, that with the support and co-operation of the University, their successes would be their successes.