

# The Varsity

PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY MORNING DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR, IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

BY

## THE LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY.

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OCTOBER 27, 1891.

### THE LITERARY SOCIETY.



THE regular meeting of the Literary Society was held last Friday evening, in the Y.M.C.A. hall. The attendance was good, the room being completely filled during the progress of the debate. New faces might be seen scattered here and there through the audience, witnessing to the fact that this year's "freshies" do not intend to be behind their predecessors in the interest manifested in the Literary Society.

After the worthy Secretary had waded through what seemed to the audience several volumes of minutes, Mr. F. E. Bigelow, Secretary of Committees, read the report of the general committee. The committee recommended, among other things, that the Corresponding Secretary be instructed to communicate with the McGill University Literary Society, to arrange for the holding of an inter-collegiate debate. On motion of Mr. Perrin the debate was fixed for some time in January, if this could be arranged. There is consequently a large probability that, at that time, our Society will wrestle in debate with the denizens of McGill.

The programme was then proceeded with. The chairman called for music. The Society was not, however, in a musical humor. The majority of the members had exhausted their musical capabilities in the corridors of

University College in the afternoon. Consequently no music was forthcoming. The chairman, expressing the hope that the meeting would work itself up to a musical frame of mind before the close, proceeded to the next number. This was an essay by Mr. W. P. Reeve, the fiery and untamed orator of '94. Instead of treating the meeting to an essay, Mr. Reeve resurrected the shaft of Daniel Webster by delivering that celebrated orator's well-known reply to Haine. The Society was requested by the Speaker to transform itself, in spirit, into the American Senate, and to put themselves back in point of time fifty or sixty years. Whether the Society succeeded in accomplishing this difficult feat is questionable. If it did, we must be bound to consider the American Senate of 1830 as an exceedingly facetious body. At all events, the speaker accomplished his task admirably, and treated the Society to an entertainment as novel as it was pleasing and instructive.

"Healthy, but out of the race," one of Bill Nye's humorous productions, was next rendered by Mr. K. D. W. McMillan. The manner in which this reading was given, and the remarks which preceded it, almost compel us to believe that '93 possesses a real live humorist. "Curly" is truly a very funny man. His reading was greeted with shouts of laughter by the audience. It was reported that one freshman actually rolled off his chair. It is to be hoped however that this is not the case. Freshmen should always keep to their chairs, except when a sophomore happens to appear; they should then immediately rise and offer it to him.

The next feature on the programme was the debate. The subject was: Resolved, that Greek should be the equivalent of French and German on the University curriculum. The affirmative was led by Mr. Shipley, who upheld the substitution of Greek for French and German, because of its greater difficulty, both in grammar and vocabulary. He eulogised the Greek language, and claimed for it more value as an educator than any other language in existence. The speaker said that in the United States, that country which was more opposed to perpetuating ancient languages than any other civilized nation, there were only four universities in which the study of Greek was not compulsory. He ably depicted the loss which the University would sustain by the study of Greek being relegated to any lower grade than that which it at present held.

Mr. Tennant followed on the negative, ably upholding the claim of Moderns to be ranked on a par with Greek. He strongly urged the fact that the crying need of the time was for practical men, and that the University must produce these. He held that the basis of utility was the only ground upon which the question could be discussed, and upon this ground Moderns must rank at least equally with Greek. The speaker also urged that we could study the Moderns with more certainty than the classics as we can understand modern environments much better than ancient. He closed his strong and convincing speech by urging that as modern development had been much more rapid than that of the ancients, modern languages should take priority over the classics.

Mr. J. H. Brown then took up the cudgel on behalf of the classics. He claimed that modern civilization could not be rightly understood without the knowledge of the civilization of the ancients. He agreed with Mr. Tennant in regarding utility as the only means by which the question at issue could be judged; but he claimed for the classics, and especially Greek, a far greater utility as an educational factor and brain developer than the moderns possessed. The speaker cited Milton and Addison as examples of the influence of the study of Greek upon literary style, and said that the master minds of English literature were moulded by the classics. Mr. Brown's speech was throughout a strong and clear marshalling of facts and arguments. The simple touches of imagination with which he relieved the rigidity of his argument were exceedingly artistic and effective.