

# THE VARSITY

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## Editorial Comments.



WITH this number VARSITY enters upon the thirteenth year of its existence. Its history during this period may be broadly divided into two sections. During the first of these it was under the control of a joint stock company, composed mainly of graduates. This regime lasted up to 1889 and was followed by a year of great darkness in our literary world, when its lamp ceased to shine. But happily our *Dark Ages* were only of brief duration, and after an interval of one year the paper was revived under a new management

Under the present system, inaugurated in 1890, VARSITY is a purely undergraduate concern, controlled by a body of directors but subordinate to that great organ of student opinion, the Literary Society. As to its success hitherto, public opinion is unanimous. Guided by some of the ablest men whom our University has sent out in recent years, it has sped onward in prosperous course. It is our hope and it shall be our endeavor to secure it a like good fortune during the academic year on which we are now entering.

So much for the past—we turn now to the future. There are various opinions as to the ideal to which this Journal should strive to attain. The safest conclusions on such a subject can be reached only by careful consideration of the position in which we stand. Briefly stated it is this—that we are forced to make one paper perform two entirely distinct functions, to serve as a newspaper, and also as a literary journal. The dawning of that happy era, when each of these functions will have its own separate organ, will settle many vexed questions in regard to the style and conduct of journalism in our University. But till then we must live as best we can.

Hitherto VARSITY has aimed at combining both these elements. Whilst giving the news of the College, it has striven also to afford a medium of communication for such as have felt the burden of messages, literary and otherwise, to the University public lying heavy upon them. The difficulties attaching to this dual position almost all centre around the question as to the relative importance of these two branches of our work. Some there are who advise the elimination of the newspaper side of that work. But the advocacy of any hasty or radical changes in that direction fails to recognize the fact that we have as yet no other agency for the publication of such items of news as concern simply the student-body. The city papers, it is true, to a certain extent accomplish this end; but their primary object is to interest the general public and it is to that end that their column of College topics is directed. Here then is a felt need: and, so long as the

present condition of affairs remains, VARSITY must endeavor, in some measure at least, to meet that need.

But let us not be misunderstood in this matter. It is by no means our opinion that VARSITY should be devoted mainly to this end. Newspaper work is only a part, and a subordinate part at that, of its mission. Its higher aim, as performing the function of a literary journal, must ever be kept in view. And it would be well that this side of its work should receive increasing attention as time goes by, and thus the transition period in which we now stand be brought to a termination. By such means gradual but substantial progress would be made; for in this, as in so many other instances, the old caution "*festina lente*" is not superfluous.

It must not be forgotten, however, that unless our students themselves are ready to contribute literary matter, the conduct of the paper along such lines will be difficult, nay rather impossible. It is not the duty of the Editor and his associates to monopolize its columns from week to week with their own productions. Their duty is rather that of selection and supervision than that of creation. We entertain the hope that there will be no difficulty in this regard, and that each and all of our subscribers will recognize his duty and will not be negligent in fulfilling it.

In the Editorial page it will be our endeavor in every topic discussed to maintain an attitude which, while respectful to the powers that be, will yet set forth, without fear or favor, such views as we believe conducive to the best interests of the undergraduate body. As representing them, VARSITY will, of course, strive to be a faithful mirror of their opinions. Unswerving loyalty to the University will be our Alpha and our Omega. But true loyalty consists, not in unquestioning submission to established institutions, but in a fair and candid criticism of those institutions from the standpoint of those affected by them; and since the undergraduates constitute so important a factor in the University, and are largely influenced by every change in method or policy, it is not unimportant that their voice in these matters should be heard and should be uttered with no uncertain sound.

In conclusion, we would crave the indulgence of our fellow-students toward us in the new position in which we find ourselves placed. In many respects it is, indeed, a very trying one. The Editorial robe as yet sits uneasy on our shoulders. When we recollect on whose it has rested in times gone by, we are forced to utter the sentiment of Horace: "*The era of our sires has brought forth us, their more degenerate sons.*" But if unwearying zeal and unstinted effort are of aught avail, these verily shall not be wanting. And we feel assured that if the students second as they ought, and as we are confident they will, the efforts of the staff, then VARSITY will weather safely through the winds and waters of another voyage.