

necessary for the societies to take some action this year so that the arrangements may be completed before VARSITY enters another year.
G. D. WILSON.

AN ALLEGED IMPRUDENCE.

To the Editor of the VARSITY.

SIR:—My attention has been called to an editorial remark in the last number of the VARSITY upon certain official announcements of mine. The allusion is not quite intelligible to me, and as I am not indisposed to intelligent public criticism upon the methods as well as the nature of my projected work, I trust that you will be so good as to explain in your journal the character of the "imprudence" referred to.

Respectfully,

Toronto, March 31, '86.

J. F. McCURDY.

[Last week we stated that an imprudence in the announcement of Dr. McCurdy's lectures had given occasion to one of our contributors for a humorous article. It should not be necessary for us to explain our meaning, but we shall do so. For very many years Mr. Hirschfelder has been the college lecturer in Oriental languages, and he has grown grey in the service of our *alma mater*. It was not prudent, then, for a new lecturer to have posted up on the public bulletin board so elaborate a notice as that which called attention to Dr. McCurdy's lectures in this department. To put it mildly, there did not seem to be any room left for Mr. Hirschfelder either on the announcement board, or on the curriculum, or in the class-room. Moreover, in the other departments students do not need to be told by a public announcement all the languages and dialects down to every detail, upon which they will be instructed. They take much of that for granted. We are aware that in some American colleges elaborate announcements may frequently be seen, but then there is a tendency in our cousins to run to spread-eagleism. In the case we are speaking of the announcement was made, we presume, under the sanction of the president of the college, but the nature of the remarks which it called forth is nevertheless fair evidence that it was an indiscretion.—EDITOR.]

THE NEW LECTURESHIP IN ORIENTAL LANGUAGES.

To the Editor of the VARSITY:

SIR,—Frequent reference has been made in your columns to the recent appointment of a lecturer in Oriental Languages, and you have either asserted or implied that there was something improper in the appointment. In connection with this will you allow me to say a few words?

I. As to the necessity for the appointment, you have stated that other departments are more in need of an additional lecturer than that of Oriental Languages. Without entering into a discussion of the relative merits of the various departments, I would call your attention to the fact that Mr. Hirschfelder, the honored lecturer in Oriental Languages, has been discharging his duties now for forty years without any assistance. During that time the work has increased more than four-fold, and those who have taken the Hebrew lectures know that when a change in the hour of a lecture was desired, how difficult it was to find an hour in which he was not engaged. When the work increased in the departments of Classics, Mathematics, Physics, and English, lecturers were appointed to do the increased work. In some of these and in other departments Fellows have also been appointed to relieve the professors and lecturers. Prior to this year no help had been given to the important department of Oriental Languages, and I think that most of your readers will admit that its turn has fairly come now.

II. As to the manner of the appointment, many readers would gather from your criticism that something unfair and improper had been done. The appointment was made by the College Council with the approval of the Minister of Education. The appointment of lecturers as professors in University College does not rest with

the Senate. As I understand the law the Senate may propose a nominee, but the College Council and the Government are the bodies directly concerned in an appointment.

Your insinuations of secrecy and of that general quietness that savours of things uncanny, is but answered by mentioning the simple fact that advertisements asking for applications for the position appeared in the daily papers a month before the appointment was made.

As you may fairly ask why I feel called upon to defend an action in which I have no direct interest, I anticipate you by saying that I only do so because I think an unjust attack has been made, which ought not to go unanswered. It may not be out of place for me to add, that, with many others who have in the past taken a warm interest in the VARSITY, I have been very much disappointed with some of its recent utterances. In my opinion many unwise attacks have been made, and the Ishmaelistic propensities of the editor indulged to the fullest extent. Every fair-minded man will approve of and welcome just and candid criticism, and should have it. It is, however, fairly open to question whether your crusade against the Theological Colleges, the College Council, and some of the lecturers in University College, and your utterances on some current questions in University matters can be denominated either just or politic.

Yours truly,

GEO. M. WRONG.

Wycliffe College, March 30, 1886.

THE CLASSICAL COURSE.

To the Editor of the VARSITY.

SIR,—Mr. Gibson's article in last week's VARSITY is evidently inspired by the conviction that somewhere in the classical course there is a wrong which should be righted. This conviction, I venture to say, is entertained by all classical men who give the matter any thought. If there is any difference of opinion it is as to the means which would most effectually remove the wrong.

But what is the wrong? To my mind it consists in the fact that, as Mr. Gibson has hinted, Latin and Greek books are too often regarded not as a literature—not as the embodiment of the thoughts of great men—but merely as "an interesting collection of modified Sauskirt roots:" a grammatical tread-mill in which the student is expected to grind for the period of his college career.

I do not decry a careful study of grammar: we all know its great importance. But we surely ought not to make it the end; it should be the means through which we seek to enter the society of Sophocles and of Plato. Thus, the attention of students of the third and fourth years should be directed less to the grammatical than to the social, political and philosophical side of Greek and Roman literature.

This would necessitate, no doubt, an alteration in the curriculum. Mr. Gibson thinks that the change should take the form of a removal of all prescribed text-books in the higher years. I cannot see how this would meet the difficulty. Perhaps an improvement might be made by specifying fewer authors, and assigning larger portions of those specified. Thus, the student would be given a more comprehensive view of the character of the author studied, his influence on his contemporaries and on succeeding ages. The teacher, too, would have a broader range: he could dwell on the author as a whole, his relation to his time, his position in literature, and many other points which can scarcely be touched under the present system of studying a writer in fragments, or rather of studying fragments of Greek and Latin, for the writer is but little studied.

I was glad to see Mr. Gibson's letter appear, and hope that it may have the effect of eliciting the views of more of our classical men on what we must regard as an important question.

S. R.