

The method to which I refer, and against which I would venture humbly to protest, is that of dictation. From beginning to end of the hour of lecture these learned men simply dictate from their manuscripts (or otherwise), and the students write down what they have dictated. It is hardly possible to imagine a worse method of teaching. It conveys hardly anything which could not be learned from books. Moreover, it gives no stimulus to the student, and this is what the student most needs. On this point there is very much to be said, as we are here touching upon the essential utility of Universities, as sources of instruction and knowledge, and we may hope that others will contribute something to the subject.

We are not instituting any sort of comparison between the Scottish and English Universities in general. It must be remembered that those of the Northern Kingdom are popular institutions, intended, like the whole education of the country, for the people in general, whilst the English Universities are, on the whole, to be regarded as aristocratic institutions. But there is one point of some importance in regard to which the advantages of Oxford and Cambridge are, and have been, so conspicuous, that it demands some careful consideration from all who are interested in these subjects. We refer to the residential system of these two great Universities, and more especially to the residential system as it generally existed at Oxford forty or fifty years ago. There was a difference at that time between the two Universities, which may possibly now have disappeared. As a rule, no Oxford College would then receive a matriculant, unless it could at once give him rooms. By this means every one who entered the University became at once a resident within one of the Colleges, having his rooms along with the other undergraduates, dining at the same table, becoming a member of the same clubs and societies, in fact, becoming a member of a family.

At Cambridge the case was different. There, as a rule, a new comer was not at once admitted to reside in the College. He had to take lodgings in the city—doubtless lodgings approved by the authorities—yet in such a way that he was not brought into close connection with the other members of the College. It is believed that this circumstance may account for the generally recognized fact, that Oxford men bear the stamp of their University more distinctly than Cambridge men. There was certainly another difference. The Oxford undergraduate was frequently sent into lodgings, before he had taken his degree, to make room for others who sought admission into the College, whilst the Cambridge man, once admitted, was allowed to remain to the end of his course. But a moment's reflection will show that this could not compensate for the loss sustained at the beginning.

In those days no one could matriculate at the University, who had not been received into a College. In later times a new institution has arisen, that of students non-attached to any College, but simply matriculated in the University, residing within its bounds for the appointed time, and gaining instruction and preparation for examinations in any way that may seem good to them. Perhaps some member of either University, who may have watched the development of this new institution, may give us his views on the subject. It is obvious that these might be of great advantage to us in our present circumstances.

There is some danger of our University life becoming an isolated, individual life, instead of a common life. If that was to come to pass, we might as well attend lectures at a Mechanics' Institute, or indeed get our learning through books and private tuition. Such a tendency may be counteracted in various ways, as is now done in many of the great American Universities, and with considerable success—by having common lodging-houses, governed by the students themselves, by having Club-houses in which ten, twelve, or twenty members of the Club lodge and board, forming a kind of family group, and in other ways. These, however, are matters which may properly be dealt with by those who have experience of such methods.

WILLIAM CLARK.

THE PROPOSED SUPERVISORY BOARD.

Editor, THE VARSITY:

DEAR SIR,—It is with pleasure that I meet your request to pen a few lines with regard to the Supervisory Board, the institution of which was proposed at last Friday's Constitutional Meeting. Especially since '91 the question, as to the possibility and advisability of a more or less centralized control of student functions and organizations, has been mooted again and again. The foundation of the Athletic Association was one result of these discussions, and the Board now appointed by a practically unanimous vote of the Literary Society is but its promising counterpart.

During the last few years two matters of great importance have, among others, attracted the attention of an influential portion of the student body. If we are correctly informed they are, first, the number of University functions and organizations, and secondly, the question of responsibility—financial responsibility, particularly—in connection with contracting indebtedness and all its train of ills on the part of student organizations. As concerns the first point, attention has been called to the possibility—which, however, at present seems very slender—of some partial combination or doubling up of the various Departmental Clubs, and again to the advisability of abandoning in favor of other larger and more important functions the yearly Class Receptions. With such matters we have only remotely to do here. With regard to the second point, undergraduate opinion seems to have gradually veered round to the conviction that some form of centralized supervision by representative men from among themselves conjointly with representatives of the College Council is now advisable. The Athletic Board, that is receiving such hearty support on all sides, is an expression of this conviction; and the same can be said of the present change in the constitution of the Literary Society, looking to the establishment of a general Supervisory Board for all student functions and organizations other than those coming within the sphere of the Athletic Association.

At present most of our College organizations are expected to act in conjunction with special committees of the College Council; some, however, for instance, those of ephemeral growth and activity and those using the name of the University of Toronto, are often not brought into contact with any supervisory body at all. This is now to be remedied as far as possible by a representative committee of four undergraduates, ap-