

THE VARSITY.

THE VARSITY is published in the University of Toronto every Saturday during the Academic Year, October to May inclusive.

The Annual Subscription, including postage, is \$2.00, payable before the end of January, and may be forwarded to THE TREASURER, T. A. GIBSON, University College. Applications respecting advertisements should be made to J. A. GARVIN, Business Manager.

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All communications should be addressed to THE EDITORS, University College, Toronto, and must be in on Wednesday of each week.

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In studying the curriculum of the University of Toronto, one cannot fail to be struck with the fact that there is laid down therein a great deal of purely elementary work in many branches. Especially is this the case in the work prescribed for first year. A large proportion of this work appears to us unnecessary, at least as far as the University is concerned. It should be done in the secondary schools. A certain portion of it is taught there. It is a question of some importance whether or not the regular University course could not be somewhat shortened with advantage. It is very often a serious matter with many young men to have to consent to give up four years of their early life to a University course, in addition to a more or less lengthy preliminary training. It appears to us that the usual order should be reversed. Make the preliminary training longer and more complete, and the University course somewhat shorter, and also more advanced. How this may best be accomplished without sacrificing thoroughness and breadth of culture to the pressing demands of time and circumstances is a matter of some difficulty of adjustment. We prefer to leave it for settlement to wiser and more experienced heads than our own. We are, however, satisfied that with the growth of our University will come the inevitable development of a more comprehensive University system, alike adapted to our needs and wishes. But that such a consummation may be aided by a judicious education and encouragement of public opinion upon the subject we are equally certain.

We may, perhaps, be permitted to point out, with all deference to existing sentiment on the subject, some details in our present system which might be changed with advantage, and without recourse being had to revolutionary or reactionary methods. As we have said, a proportionately large period of the present University course is devoted to ordinary instruction in most elementary branches. Especially is this the case with subjects taken up in the First year. A few particulars will suffice to make good the truth of our assertion. In the department of Mathematics, the first six books of Euclid are laboriously taught to the Freshmen class. Also the elements of Algebra and Trigonometry are taught and examined upon. Now these branches should be, and indeed are, the proper work of the secondary schools. Their retention, therefore, on the curriculum of our University, is *prima facie* evidence that they are regarded by the University authorities as having been indifferently taught in the High Schools or Collegiate Institutes. But this we are not inclined to believe. Indeed we have most positive evidence that not only are these portions of the Mathematics taught, and well taught, in the secondary schools, but that the curricula of these schools go far beyond these elements. Again, in regard to Modern Languages: Much valuable time is employed in drilling students in the very rudiments of French and German. Indeed these subjects are taught from the very beginning, and to instruction in the grammar of these languages is devoted no inconsiderable portion of the time of students in our University. Other instances quite as apparent might be cited in support of our contention, but a glance at the University curriculum will fully corroborate our statements in every particular.

Is it unreasonable, then, to ask why the time both of Professors and students should be taken up with giving and receiving instruction in the very elements of subjects which are the proper function of the secondary schools to take charge of? We think not. Again, the privilege of matriculating at the end of the First year, by passing the first regular University examination, is, to our way of thinking, presumptive evidence that the University authorities are satisfied that students can acquire sufficient knowledge of those branches now taught in the First year, without attendance on the lectures given in them to regular students of that year, by the college Professors and Lecturers. The logical conclusion which may be drawn from these facts is irresistible in favour of amending the present curriculum by doing away with a large portion of the work now done in the First year, and insisting—as would practically follow—upon such work being more thoroughly done in the Secondary Schools.

It may not unfairly be asked by those who cannot entirely agree with us in our views on this subject: What advantages would result from the adoption of such a course as has been proposed, which would compensate for the removal of almost an entire year's work? Our answer is: (1) That the work is really not University work at all; and, also, that it would be done much more thoroughly and with better results in the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes, whose very existence pre-supposes the prosecution of such comparatively advanced studies. (2) That the University course might be shortened, if that were advisable, and the year gained by the relief given by the Secondary Schools could be devoted—if need be—to more advanced, and post-graduate, work, adequate provision or encouragement for which is not provided for with anything like that degree of completeness and thoroughness which we cannot but regard as most essential and necessary to the requirements of students or compatible with the dignity and standing of our Provincial University. For the lack of these, however, the University authorities must be acquitted. They have done and are doing their best to utilize the scanty means at their command for the interest of the students, and had they reasonably adequate means at their command, we are fully satisfied that they would be wisely and judiciously administered. The duty of providing this much-needed endowment rests with the Government, and the alumni and friends of the Provincial University. The duty of each is clear. That of the alumni is to press, and continue to press the claims of their *Alma Mater* upon the Government; and to arouse and educate public opinion and sympathy in its behalf. That of the Government is to acquiesce gracefully and generously in the demands of that influential and responsible body of their constituents which are represented by the authorities and graduates of the University of Toronto. Let each do their duty, and we have no fear of the result. We shall continue to do ours, and would urge upon our friends the supreme necessity of being true to the interests confided to their care.

The Editors of THE VARSITY are desirous of aiding the compilers of the forthcoming "Toronto University Song Book." With that object in view they would invite such of their readers as may feel an interest in the matter to send in lists of the best 50 standard songs which they would like to see incorporated in the Song Book, giving in each case (if possible) the names of the author and composer. Readers will please send in their lists on or before the 15th February. After that date a list of the most popular songs will be published in this paper, with the number of votes cast in favor of each. It is hoped that a large number of our readers will interest themselves in this matter, as their co-operation will greatly facilitate the work of the Compilation Committee, and also insure that all tastes are consulted in the selection of songs. Readers will please send in their lists, on or before the 15th of February, in a sealed envelope addressed to F. B. Hodgins, VARSITY Office, and endorsed, "List of Songs." Voters will also not neglect to send in their names, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.