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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.

What our University needs is money. There is no use blinking the facts, they exist, and demand thoughtful consideration. One fact is that every year the University is confronted by a deficit, which this year is tremendous. Another fact is the perennial lukewarm support of the Legislature. Another is the meagre endowment of the University. It is said the Boston man doubts the security of his grave unless he remembers Harvard in his will. But the Toronto man, apparently, rests easy. Everyone knows that the finances of the University are managed splendidly, but, at the same time, it is to be regretted that the authorities are placed under a stringency which cannot help but hamper them in extending its usefulness.

Like everything else this state of affairs must have a cause. The difficulty is to find it. Is it because Canada is a new country and her people have not yet been educated up to the needs of higher education? True, in the Old Country Oxford and Cambridge are inseparably interwoven with the political, social and economic life of the nation. There, most of the members of parliament are graduates. In Ontario not half a dozen members are graduates. It is true also, that in the past the greater part of our national energy has been devoted to the mere accumulation of material wealth. But a change has come. Lately a higher national life has evolved and a keener competition has sprung up. The popular idol is no longer the "self-made" man. The nation has now come to look to its universities for men highly trained under the best academic methods. Moreover the above explanation fails altogether to account for the wealth of such American universities as Columbia, Michigan, Yale and a host of others. Surely Canada appreciates higher education as much as the United States. Even in Canada we call to mind the princely endowments which McGill has received from some of her sons and from public spirited men.

We are told by some that the heart of the difficulty lies in the University's connection with the State, which, they say, tends to discourage private endowment. The question of State support of universities is too large to go into here. Suffice it to say that the tendency seems to be overwhelmingly in favor of it. In the United States it is irresistible. There, there are thirty-three State universities. Besides, the State has given generous support to certain quasi-state institutions, for example, \$595,797 to Harvard, \$122,500 to Yale and \$140,000 to Columbia, with exemptions from taxation to all. But in the United States public support has not checked private benevolence. The two go hand in hand and donations such as that of James Lick of \$1,650,000 to the University of California are monumental evidence for this statement. More important still is the greater number of smaller donations which pour in from all over the land. Indeed, most men would rather support the child of the State than some denominational or privately endowed institution which is apt to be dependent, insecure, inadequate, imperfect, expensive and exclusive. The State University is wedded to a democratic community. With regard to the University of Toronto, it is only fair to say, a few have done nobly. The pity is that more have not followed their example.

So far then the difficulty remains, nor are we likely to arrive at a complete solution of it. Reasoning inductively, however, it would seem that a partial solution is suggested by the fact that our University lacks one feature, which McGill and American universities have, viz.; an active organization of her alumni. Without mincing matters, a real reason that the University of Toronto is not better financially supported is the indifference of her graduates—I will not say her undergraduates—to the interests of their *Alma Mater*. For this we may chiefly blame lack of organization.

Associations of alumni constitute this organization in American universities. Though similar in their main object to Convocation in English universities they are not statutory bodies and may or may not be open to undergraduates.

That of the University of Michigan may be regarded as typical. It consists (1) of a general association of all the *alumni*, graduate and undergraduate, and (2) of local resident associations in most of the large cities. The general officers are the president, vice-president, recorder, treasurer, general secretary, five directors and the secretaries of the local associations. The mainspring of the association seems to be its publication, called *The Michigan Alumnus*, a monthly periodical, containing over one hundred pages of very interesting reading. The editor-in-chief, who is also general secretary of the association, is a recent graduate ('96) and receives a salary of \$1,550 a year. The other editors on the board are managing editor, University editor, department editors, aecrologist, athletic editor and undergraduate assistants. The paper reflects the life and affairs of the University from all sides and affords information of the whereabouts, doings and deaths of graduates.

The Association is really one big fraternity, meeting annually or on the occasion of some important event in connection with the University. As it represents the best element in the community it naturally has considerable power, in both its collective and individual capacity, to influence the legislature and educate the people. The success of the University of Michigan to-day is in no small degree due to the loyalty, enterprise and effective work of this Association.

In our own University no such association exists. One did exist, but, owing to bad management, came to grief in the disturbance of 1895. Convocation is also practically a lifeless body, the secretary having gone West, there died, and never been replaced.

At present the case is more hopeful. The Editor of *Varsity* has taken the matter up and placed it before the undergraduates. At the same time a movement to form a general association has come from a local club of Alumni in Ottawa. There is a similar club in Hamilton which, no doubt, will co-operate.

The reasons for such a step are obvious. Chauncey M. Depew said at a Yale alumni banquet "As the Saga to the Norsemen, the Cross to the Crusader, one sentiment warms our hearts and stirs our blood beyond all other rallying cries, and it is old Yale. It brings back the precious memories, the glorious times of our student days, the venerable age, the ever vigorous youth, the noble fame of our *Alma Mater*. We are once more at home with the elms, the fence, the campus and the girls."