

accumulated with such unparalleled rapidity, and to such an extent that a very large number of Englishmen have come to look upon wealth as the chief, if not the only, good, and the attainment of it as the sole end of life. But it must not be forgotten that this immense national wealth has been acquired at a fearful price. For the sake of her merchant princes England sacrificed the national honor in that most disgraceful, most unrighteous war with China, known as the Opium War. For the benefit of those of her capitalists who held Turkish securities, England sacrificed the lives of many thousands of her bravest sons in the Crimea. To aggrandize her landowners she has made a perpetual sacrifice of the miserable inhabitants of the sister island, and at home her policy has been such that though the rich have been made richer, the poor have been made poorer, and that falsely called prosperity of the nation has not been the prosperity of the people.

But the present movement is being carried on with the view of changing all this, by setting before the English nation a higher aim than the mere accumulation of wealth at any price. The object is to displace the worship of gold by the worship of beauty in its widest and fullest sense, and although this is only the substitution of one secondary end of life for another, few persons would hesitate in deciding which of these two ends is the higher. The apostles of this great movement, which has been fitly termed the English Renaissance, are Professor John Ruskin and Mr. Oscar Wilde. Ruskin represents the philosophical and conservative side of the movement; Wilde represents it rather on the progressive and practical side. Like all practical young men and all radicals in the early stages of any movement, Mr. Wilde has perhaps exaggerated the importance of the doctrine which he advocates; but this error, if error it be, is too harmless to merit censure, and too common to merit ridicule. Yet Mr. Wilde's lot has fallen in an evil time. Probably no modern innovator has met with so much unreasonable and persistent abuse. This results in a great measure from the fact that people have formed their opinions of this gentleman and his theories from the misleading representations of comic illustrated journals, comic stage plays, and the one cent evening newspaper. Now, while all will recognize the invaluable services which have been rendered at times by such agencies to social and moral reform, yet it by no means follows that the authors of these productions are to be taken for infallible guides on every great question that may arise, and this for several reasons. A comic journalist who is actually compelled to say something funny every week, is not always so scrupulous as might be wished in selecting subjects of his satiric pen, and whenever he makes an unusually lucky stroke the temptation is very great to follow up his success by wilful misrepresentation of the subject he has chosen. American witty writers have been more especially affected by this pernicious influence. They had completely exhausted themselves on mothers-in-law, fat men with bald heads, orange peel, tacks and bent pins, mules and goats; and the whole race of American wits would speedily have become extinct had not the fortunate arrival of Mr. Wilde and his famous sunflower brought them relief at the last moment. As for the writers in our ordinary daily newspapers, none of them have the time, and few of them have the ability, to deal with this subject of art cultivation as its merits demand. An article which is written, printed, read and forgotten almost before the ink has dried on the manuscript, is hardly the place where we could expect to find any very weighty opinions on important and somewhat abstruse subjects. When in addition to these considerations we remember that we ourselves, as well as newspaper writers, are only too prone to ridicule what we do not understand, simply because we do not understand it, we might come to the very sensible conclusion that it would be much better for us to refrain from judging Mr. Oscar Wilde too severely until we know at least something about him.

To all those who have not allowed themselves to be prejudiced against Mr. Wilde by the bitter attacks of the *profanum vulgus* of the newspaper world, we commend the following extract from his Boston address. He would be a clever critic indeed who could find anything ridiculous here, either in the language or in the sentiment. On the contrary, we think that for richness of diction, wealth of imagery and general beauty of expression, this extract stands unsurpassed by any writer on the same subject: "And so with you; let there be no flower in your meadows that does not wreath its tendrils round your pillows, no little leaf in your Titan forests that does not lend its form to design, no curving spray of wild rose or brier that does not live forever in carven arch or window of marble, no bird in your air that is not giving the iridescent wonder of its color, the exquisite curves of its wings in flight, to make more precious the preciousness of simple adornment; for the voices that have their dwelling in sea and mountain are not the chosen music of liberty only. Other messages there are in the wonder of wind-swept heights and the majesty of silent deep—messages that, if you will listen to them, will give you the wonder of all new imagination, the treasure of all new beauty."

DON QUIXOTE.

## COMMUNICATION.

To the Editor of the 'Varsity.

DEAR SIR,—Now that a spirit of wise reform and well-considered innovation seems to have overtaken the Senate, a few remarks from the point of view of an undergraduate may not be out of place in the organ of University opinion. Before any extensive changes are made it would be wise to consider well whether the principle of specialization which underlies our Honor courses, is a safe one when carried as far as the Senate seems inclined to push it. While this plan is not so faulty as the opposite extreme of dividing the energies of students over the whole field of knowledge, yet in many respects there are grave objections to it. The true path here, as in so many other cases, lies in the golden mean. The undergraduates should spend their time *principally* not *exclusively* on one department. To illustrate what is meant, suppose the whole field of knowledge to be divided into six departments, we think that the true plan is not to have the student spend one-sixth of his time on each department, nor, as is now the case at least in the higher years, spend nearly the whole of his time on one department, but to allow him to spend, say, two-thirds of his time, in one department, and the remaining one-third on a wise selection from the other five departments. In view of the tendency to break up the present Honor courses and of the necessity of establishing new ones, there is more than usual need that the dangers of exclusive devotion to one department should be avoided. Many of the examiners by preventing the examinations of Honor men in their Pass subjects from becoming a farce, and by setting papers which shall require a deeper knowledge of these subjects than can be attained by a mere cram, have it in their power to do a great deal in this direction. Of late years one can notice a laudable improvement in this respect. Though this, like all reforms, involves a little inconvenience to many parties, yet this should not influence examiners to abandon their work of elevating the standard, till in a few years it will be generally understood that the Pass work has to be mastered. Then no longer will the fair fame of Alma Mater be tarnished by disgraceful boasts about spending half a day on important and interesting subjects.

THOROUGH.

## NOTICE.

The 'VARSITY is published every Saturday during the Academic Year, October to May inclusive.

The Annual Subscription, including postage, is \$1.50, in advance, and may be forwarded to MR. A. F. LOBB, University College, Toronto, to whom applications respecting Advertisements should likewise be made.

Copies of the 'VARSITY may be obtained every Saturday of MR. WILKINSON corner of Adelaide and Toronto Streets.

All communications should be addressed to THE EDITOR, University College, Toronto.

Rejected Communications will not be returned, to which rule no exception can be made. The name of the WRITER must always accompany a Communication.

## UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO.

It has been decided to produce the *Antigone* in the original Greek, in the Convocation Hall of the University, during the month of March next.

The University Glee Club will sing the choruses, arranged to the music of Mendelssohn, and the characters will be taken by gentlemen connected with the University.

There will be two representations.

Applications for seats will be received from Graduates and Undergraduates up to the 28th day of February next, after which date other applications will be received.

Applications to be addressed to H. S. Osler, Esq., Secretary Finance Committee, from whom all information can be obtained.

Price of Tickets: Reserved Seats, \$1.50; Ordinary Seats, \$1.00.

MAURICE HUTTON,  
Chairman of Committee.

20th January, 1882.

## J. PIDDINGTON, MAMMOTH BOOK EMPORIUM,

248, 250 & 252 YONGE STREET,

TORONTO.

Dealer in New and Second-hand Books; 80,000 volumes, in all departments of Literature. College Text Books in the largest variety. 50 per cent. saved if you purchase your Books Second-hand.