

THE ' VARSITY:

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF

EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY POLITICS AND EVENTS.

Vol. I. No. 12.

January 8, 1881.

Price 5 cts.

THE LATE VICE-CHANCELLOR MOSS.

The early death of this distinguished graduate who filled until a few days since, the office of Vice-Chancellor of the University with so much honor to himself, and advantage to Alma Mater, has been received with the deepest regret in more than one intellectual circle. At each stage of his life it seems to have been the fortune of Chief Justice Moss, to attract by magnetic sympathy, the affection and respect of all with whom he came in contact. His school-companions at Upper Canada College are scattered far and wide, yet they still cherish his memory. Amongst politicians he moved for a brief space, and won golden opinions from both sides. At the bar and on the bench the lustre of early success, as well as the conscientious industry and self-sacrifice characteristic of him, made our departed friend not only conspicuous, but, what is less frequently the case, admired without envy, and beloved without an *arrière pensée* of jealousy. But it is amongst University men especially that the loss comes home with a sense as of personal bereavement. Nowhere outside the circle of the family from which he has been untimely snatched has he left mourners more sincere or regretful than in the academic halls of Toronto. Every one of us has lost a friend, whose place, must of necessity remain a blank in life, yet kept enshrined in that silent gallery through which memory walks alone to ponder and to dream on all that was, and all that might have been.

Vice-Chancellor Moss—for we prefer to call him so, rather than by the higher judicial title—was pre-eminently a University man. Other graduates have risen to high stations in the world; but he never forsook his first love. Having won merited distinction from the University, he remained faithful to her interests while he lived, and, so to speak, remained, in the ardor of his attachment, an undergraduate all his days. When, at the last Commencement, he was absent from the president's seat, not even the presence of Mr. Blake, the Chancellor, honored son of the University as he is, could supply the place of one who was destined to fill it no more. What were the qualities which gave the late Vice-Chancellor so strong a place in the hearts of University men? It was not merely his academic success, although that, undoubtedly has nerved the resolution and quickened the energy of many an undergraduate. Mr. Moss's triumphs were justly subjects of pride; yet they can hardly be repeated in days when the ardent thirst for culture has spread over a wider area. Intellectual division of labor has asserted itself, and the triple honors of 1858 are not to be again won by a fourth-year-man.

The true reason for the affection borne to the Vice-Chancellor was his singularly-attractive personal character. There was a notable absence in him of any personal littleness of feeling, any brusqueness of manner, any boisterous self-assertion. He looked not so much upon his own things, as upon the things of others. Wherever a smile of encouragement, a word of cheery

advice, or a substantial measure of help was needed, it was never withheld by Thomas Moss. The traits of character which now, unhappily add to the poignancy of regret, won the affection which has been now so rudely snapped asunder. As already suggested, the Vice-Chancellor remained an undergraduate in feeling all his life. Neither judicial station, nor its onerous duties, severed him from those who were plodding along on the path he had so successfully trodden. When he met an undergraduate he met with him on equal terms, and the score of years which had passed since he graduated, vanished from sight. The gulf of time was bridged by genuine fellow feeling, and he stood as one of themselves, to rejoice in their successes, and advise them out of the resources of a matured experience. It is not often that undergraduates can boast of so single-hearted, honest, and capable an adviser, and they, perhaps more than any others, feel his loss at this first hour of bereavement. Others have reflected lustre on the University in many walks of life. Vice-Chancellor Moss was identified with its life to the last, and died in its service.

Nor was it only in strictly academic pursuits that his generous sympathy was available. In the physical exercises, unknown in his time, he took the warmest interest, and stimulated others to avail themselves of advantages denied, in those precarious years of University existence, to himself. The Literary Society which now meets in sections, was a tender plant in Mr. Moss's undergraduate days; yet he was one of those who nursed it when in decay, and left it a strong and vigorous College institution. In the first public debate, looked forward to by its participants with so much nervous trepidation, he took part, and so zealously strove for the success of the Society that he may not improperly be styled one of its re-founders and re-establishers. In every phase of University life he felt a tender interest and took an indefatigable share from the moment of his matriculation until his premature death—a period of twenty-six years. To undergraduates then, no less than to that scattered body who have gone forth from the University halls, the tidings of his death are inexpressibly painful. Every one feels that he has lost a friend, and all that remains is a memory of one too early removed—a life of rich promise whose sun had not passed the meridian. To the widow and children of their lamented friend University men extend their warmest sympathy, and offer, not so much in words as in deepest feeling, their sincere and regretful condolence. The place left vacant is not easily to be filled, and Vice-Chancellor Moss will live in a nobler shrine than sarcophagus of marble—the hearts and tender memories of his brothers of the Toronto University.

CONVOCATION.

From the programme published in another column it will be seen that there is to be a business meeting of Convocation on Friday evening next. The items of business coming up are