

VARSITY

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CONTENTS.

TOPICS OF THE HOUR--	PAGE
Our Christmas Number.....	85
Philetus as an Annotator.....	85
Initiation.....	85
Mr. Cockburn as a Critic.....	83
LEADING ARTICLE--	
Federalism in Government.....	86
LITERATURE--	
Mind-Reading.....	Jewlyah 87
The Future of Woman.....	Phillips Stewart 88
UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE NEWS--	
A Night with University Students.....	A Grad. 90
Ixion's Caverns.....	91
Mathematical and Physical Society--Engineering Society--Natural Science Association--Modern Language Club--Historical and Poli- tical Science Club--Y. M. C. A.--Wycliffe College--Rugby Football	91
The Undergraduate Dinner.....	92
The Late Mr. S. W. Broad, B.A.....	93
COMMUNICATIONS--	
L.L.D.....	R. E. Kingsford 96
University Customs.....	Vigilantibus 93
Is Competition a Choice or a Necessity?.....	W. H. Fraser 94
FACT AND FUN.....	95

THE VARSITY.

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Topics of the Hour.

THE holiday number of the VARSITY will follow directly upon the present issue. It will probably appear about the 23rd inst. We still have room for a few contributions, and if our undergraduate friends will do their fair share of this work, the entire success of the Christmas issue will be assured. All contributions should be in our hands not later than Thursday next. We have secured contributions from several able writers in addition to those mentioned last week. Mr. Martin J. Griffin has sent us an article on "A New Volume of Thackeray." A beautiful poem, "Carmen Nativitatis," is contributed by "Fidelis," whose name is familiar to all Canadian magazine readers. Dr. Wilson has also sent us a poem, and with it all kind wishes for the future of the VARSITY. Mr. C.

Brent will describe "A Christmas in Trinidad." Mr. H. L. Dunn contributes a sonnet; and a writer of wide reputation will appear anonymously in a brilliant article on "The University of the Future."

WE have often had occasion to speak of the harm done to the young student of English by the injudicious questions of examiners and by the excessive use of annotations of the text prescribed. Most editors of literary texts commit the exceedingly reprehensible error of breaking up all the intellectual food there is in an author into spoon-victuals, for the supposed greater advantage of the student. They mistake instruction for education. In this case the annotator gets all the education, and the student simply commits to memory the dry external results of another person's mental labor. Nothing more deadening in its effects upon the intellect can be conceived, and yet it is the process which seems very generally to prevail in schools and colleges under the name of English literary education. We notice in our contemporary, the *Educational Weekly*, a style of annotation which differs very materially from that just mentioned. The editor of the literary papers signed "Philetus" seems to have struck the right idea that the proper use of notes is rather for the purpose of suggestion than of information. He seems to think, and rightly, that literary education can only be obtained by the study of literature itself, and so he is contented with asking such questions and throwing out such hints as will lead the student to think out the meaning of the text for himself. No information is given except what cannot be got from a careful study of the lesson itself, or from other general sources which are ordinarily available to the student, and there is no attempt to drag into the lesson the general information which is such an attraction and a snare to the ordinary annotator.

IN our news columns will be found an account of a dramatic episode which occurred at an early hour last Saturday morning in the subterranean halls of University College. We cannot but think that the College Council have dignified this little freak to a far greater degree than its intrinsic importance deserved. We have no sympathy with rowdyism in any of its phases, and we shall always uphold the authority of the College when there is need for its exercise. But really, a ceremony conducted with such decorum as it is said characterized this affair, seems open to objection mainly on account of the anxiety which it causes the faculty. Apart from unimportant incidents of place and time, and the theatrical paraphernalia of dress and stage scenery which appertain to college initiations, there are quite as serious disturbances every week among the undergraduates of every cross-roads school in the country, and nobody pays any attention to them. As a general thing the novitiates enjoy the fun of college initiations. The main objection appears to come from those who do not know by personal observation or experience how really harmless and trivial the whole affair usually