

ANOTHER VIEW.

To the Editor of THE VARSITY :

SIR,—On Oct. 31st, there appeared in your editorial columns an article on "Clubs and Societies," which must have attracted the attention of every thoughtful reader, as affording an interesting indication of the present tendency of student life. As you have recently extended a very generous invitation to contributors, I venture to make a few observations on the matter.

Your remarks, Sir, on the subject are both interesting and suggestive. That there is "a wider education than can be obtained through professors and books alone" is a fact that no reasonable man will deny, and for which no one is more thankful than myself. The work in the classroom needs, as you say, to be supplemented; and incentives to originality are undoubtedly valuable. But these statements, and, indeed, the whole editorial, are calculated if I mistake not, to strengthen a tendency already too strong—a tendency which has ere now caused many a young Marcellus to be cut off in the bloom of promise, which has influenced many a brilliant student to almost fritter away four precious years, and which has sent forth from the College hall many a premature graduate to whom might well be applied the words of the Homeric bard, "Full many a thing he knew, and ill he knew them all."

Taking such well-known facts as these into consideration, I, for one, can see no special cause for mutual congratulation in the establishment of a new club, even of a chess club, amid the multifarious existing societies. Students of political economy may indeed find especial delight in a game which recalls so closely that subject whose intricacy, both as taught and understood, is so well-known; but the average undergraduate may be pardoned if he fails to rejoice in the fact that a number of students have banded themselves together to devote several hours a week to a pursuit which at best should surely occupy only a stray social evening; nor indeed will his scruples be overcome by the fact that every facility has been graciously granted by the authorities. He may, too, be excused if he is unable to excite within his breast any enthusiasm for the "new era" and for this kind of "gradual growth of undergraduate institutions." What, pray, shall the "new era" be called? Shall it be the "Era of Recreation"?—a new one indeed, but one likely to be very unproductive. In this Saturnian age, we shall, I suppose, no longer be hampered by Latin prose or algebraic problems. French grammar or German prose will no longer "clog the souls that fain would rise."

In place of the wonted tome, beneath the student's arm will be seen the chess-board and the card-case. "The gradual growth of undergraduate institutions"—how much pray, is wrapped up in that most Gladstonian phrase! Whist, of course, and, may we not fairly add, checkers and billiards, dominoes and marbles. The bean-board and the carpet-ball will join the cricket-bat and the club in the corner of the residence boudoir; and the fair freshette, as she packs her Saratoga, will furtively stuff in "Old Maid" and "Louisa" beside the yellow-covered novel and the box of curling-pins.

Such a broad extension, indeed, of the already vast number of societies can be viewed only with alarm. Making all due allowances for the many beneficial influences outside the class room, we must insist that it is from our special studies that we derive the greatest and most permanent good. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the country at large, which is educating at considerable expense these young men and women, look to them for leaders in technical knowledge, scientific skill, literature and art; and hence any conditions which militate against this result, through loss of time and lack of concentration arising from the multiplicity of distracting influences, must be deeply deplored.

In conclusion, it must be remembered that we have been speaking only of tendencies and it is difficult to say just when there is any great danger from extremes; but, at any rate, when the editor of the leading College paper of Canada is roused to enthusiasm by the formation of a chess-club, and devotes the editorial columns to eulogy of a favorite game, it seems that a few words on the other side might be both timely and necessary.

Nov. 2nd, 1895.

W. J. WRIGHT, '96.

A SUGGESTION.

To the Editor of THE VARSITY :

SIR.—The Rugby Championship is ours. No need to repeat that statement. Everywhere the College is ringing with it, and all distinctions of man and woman, sport and plug, professor and student are lost in rejoicing at the honour which is ours.

Whom have we to thank for all this? The fifteen, certainly, but, more particularly, the gallant Captain, "Biddy" Barr. We admire the skilled exponent of any manly game; but in him we must admire not only the skill, but the patient perseverance and indomitable courage which has turned a raw team into the Champions of Ontario, and has brought to his college the glory in which we all share. Would it not be unpardonable in us to take to ourselves this glory, without shewing in some substantial and lasting manner the gratitude of the undergraduates of this University to him whose manly, patient endeavour has, more than aught else, brought the championship to old Varsity under such unfavourable circumstances? Ought we not to show unmistakably to the gallant "Biddy" and his men our appreciation of their achievement? It is not necessary for me to suggest the form which this testimony should take, but it should be lasting and worthy the event which calls for it.

Nov. 11th, 1895.

JOHN JENNINGS.

CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION.

The Classical Association held its regular meeting last Tuesday, with Mr. Carruthers in the chair. The attendance was fairly large, considering the fact that a football match was being played on the lawn. The programme was one of decided interest for all classical students; as the essays, "Electra and Antigone" by Mr. P. J. Robinson, and "The Character of Media" by Mr. Sinclair, treated of the three most interesting female characters in Greek tragedy.

Mr. Robinson showed that the difficulty experienced by the present age, in understanding and appreciating to the full the characters of Electra and Antigone, arose from the difference existing between our social system and that of the Greeks, whose whole social fabric scarcely extended beyond the family and family relations. The comparison made between Electra and Cordelia, Lady Macbeth and Hamlet was full of interest and originality. In the portrayal of the character of Antigone, and in contrasting her gentle and womanly nature with the fiercer and more passionate Electra, the writer showed taste and skill. Mr. Robinson had evidently been unsparing of time and work in the preparation of his paper, and was deservedly complimented by the chairman. Mr. Sinclair's essay showed evidence of careful preparation, and the modern up-to-date way in which it was handled procured it a good reception.

The next meeting of the Association will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 19th, when Mr. Sandwell, '97, will read a paper on "Translating Homer," and Mr. Buchanan, '97, on "Bentley." As these meetings are a source of profit and instruction, it is hoped that all students in Classics will make it a point to attend.