

# The Varsity

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TORONTO, NOVEMBER 2, 1898.

## HALLOWE'EN.

Hallowe'en has come and gone, and with it has come and gone that one day in which Toronto may be said to be dominated by the thousands of students, who, during the rest of eight months, live almost unnoticed in the city. And surely it is not too often for us to make ourselves felt in some tangible way? We believe the good people of Toronto would miss our celebration, if it were given up. At least they crowd the theatres which we patronize; they throng the streets when we come out; and last, but not least, they give us a special guard of honor in the shape of the only military men which the city itself controls—we mean the police, who are good fellows at heart, and enjoy the fun perhaps as much as we do. We must not think of doing away with Hallowe'en. The celebration, in some merry way, of All Hallows' Eve, has come to us from our fathers, and we must pass it on.

## THE DEBATING UNION.

Following upon the heels of the successful initiation of the Inter-collegiate Rugby Union, comes the prospect of the Debating Union. Negotiations are at present in active progress between the Literary Society and representatives of the other Toronto colleges looking to the formation of an Inter-collegiate Debating Contest. THE VARSITY can only wish that the new organization may have the same good fortune as its model in the domain of athletics.

It has often been remarked that while painting and sculpture, and music and literature, have, in modern times, flourished as luxuriantly as they did in the ancient world, that among her sister arts eloquence alone seems to have well nigh died away. Among others who have investigated the reasons for this fact is David Hume. He considers that it has merely happened that no orator, the equal of Demosthenes or Cicero has arisen in our later age. Sometimes it is said that we have too much common sense nowadays to allow the rock of our cold reason to be overturned and carried away by a torrent of words—mere words.

Hume believes that Demosthenes had as much common sense to the hundred words as any modern "speaker." But whether or not we accept Hume's opinion as to the gift of eloquence being a matter of chance, still we must admit that there is not much opportunity for the rise of great orators, if the study of public speaking be neglected. It is practice that makes perfect. The sculptor must model long in clay before he turns his hands towards marble; the painter must toil his way through the difficulties of fore-shortening and perspective, ere his picture is hung in the academy; the poet must have made himself master of rime and rhythm and imagery, or he cannot hope for any lasting fame; why, then, should the man who feels the gift of eloquence in his breast feel any diffidence about stumbling or even breaking down? It is only by making mistakes we learn to avoid them. We must crawl and creep before walking.

The Friday evening meeting of the Literary Society may teach a man to clothe his thoughts in sentences that are clear, pointed and concise, but there is no incentive to cultivate "oratory." The atmosphere is entirely uncongenial. Oratory at an ordinary meeting of the "Lit." would be grotesque, laughable, impossible. It needs the public contest to induce our many good "speakers" to study to add to their pith, their clearness, and their directness, the irresistible charm of eloquence.

Many of our students mean to enter the Law or the Church. For such, the power to speak with point and grace and fire is half the battle. There should consequently be no lack of entries. But we want, besides, a large number of contestants of a high quality of speaking. We think that the man whose speech wins the first place ought to have to prepare carefully what he has to say, and then say well what he has prepared. To do this, perhaps, demands a great deal of time. So it should. It is worth while. The training undergone and experience obtained ought to be reward enough for all the contestants, whether winners or losers in the struggle. But to make fight the keener, and add more interest, a prize of twenty-five dollars will be awarded the winner. THE VARSITY is entirely in favor of the proposed contest. It will not only help to revive amongst us one of the finest and most useful of the arts, but will also bring the students of the different colleges of Toronto into closer touch with one another. To see in friendly rivalry men from Knox, Trinity, St. Michael's, or the embryo statesmen of Political Science—to see all these in good-natured competition can we believe be provocative of nothing but good.

## CONVERSATION ROOM.

A week ago, THE VARSITY printed a letter from "Spot," as to the desirability of the establishment of a Conversation Room in the Students' Union Building. This is a question of considerable interest to the under-