

THE VARSITY

Published weekly by the students of the University of Toronto. Annual subscription, One Dollar, payable strictly in advance. For advertising rates apply to the Business Manager. Address all communications for publication to the Editor-in-Chief, University College.

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TORONTO, November 12th, 1901.

THE divine safeguard of privilege is responsibility; trusts and talents Providence demands the exercise. Energies droop, faculties weaken unless quickened and enlivened by God-given opportunities for employment. Very scrupulous then and careful should all undergraduates be to guard against loss of power by becoming mere receptacles for, instead of, at the same time, living exponents of truth. Gratitude for, and appreciation of the lavish bounties of a gracious Alma Mater, should characterise the conduct of all true and thoughtful students. Nor can the just demands of our Alma Mater be satisfied by an impassioned harangue on the virtues of esprit-du-corps, nor by a glowing and graphic presentation of the merits of that most abstract of all conceptions, College spirit. The frequency with which appeals based upon these cries have been employed by the tactful wielder of the subscription list, to win our unsuspecting hearts, and have been used as incentives to rend the heavens with the Varsity yells during Rugby matches and street parades, cannot fail to give us a flimsy, lop-sided, idea of what genuine College spirit is, and what we owe our University.

Genuine college spirit is desirable. But it's commonly received interpretation, if we can judge by the numerous cases in which we have heard the expression used, is ridiculous and hurtful. If a student cannot or will not join the "Lit" he is deficient forsooth in College spirit. If an undergraduate fails to wear a gown, straightway he is lacking in College spirit. He is exhorted to subscribe for THE VARSITY, to become a member of The Union because that is showing a true college spirit. If a person thinks he should spend an evening at work instead of some class function he is reminded that he should stand by the university and show college spirit. We admit that these condemnations are not indulged in by a great number of students, and that all of the above instances may quite conceivably conduce to college spirit. But what we maintain is that we have no right to judge another, and to pronounce upon his actions an emphatic and condemning verdict. We must remember that college spirit is the moving principle of action and not the concrete result. It is simply another case where man has been looking on the outward appearance and not on the heart.

Too often our interpretation of college spirit implies a neglect of our academic duties. Nay we have even gone so far as to extend the opprobrious epithet "plug" to the student whose actions are characterised not by an extreme and excessive devotion to work but by diligence. But surely so far college spirit ought to be from being regarded as an antithesis to a conscientious performance of our purely student duties, that here especially it should have its best field to work. An honest endeavor to make the most of all college opportunities, a keen appreciation of the privilege enjoyed in listening to the best efforts of many years of labor and research on the part of men of lofty ideals and high aims, a hearty desire to cooperate with an institution whose object is to inculcate the love of liberty chastened by law, to stimulate efforts on behalf of humanity and civilization, and to promote a reverence for just and equitable government, a feeling of sympathy and love for fellow students striving for personal success and direct usefulness in life, a desire for improvement, and withal a reverential attitude towards truth should be constituent elements in all college spirit. College spirit demands all-sided development. Our spiritual, intellectual, physical natures must be cultivated and trained.

Perhaps we cannot accuse the undergraduate body of being lacking in one phase of college spirit—in loyalty to our university. But too often has our college spirit been a loyalty to our college, or in other words to ourselves, and a cynical disregard of the rights of others. Are we not sometimes too prone to think that the preservation of college spirit depends upon keeping our lines intact in street parades? Is the poor outsider who wishes to cross a street and has often the necessity and perhaps the right to do so, a victim to our college spirit, or is he a victim to our lack of genuine college spirit? Is "keep the lines" a mark of pure college spirit or are we drawing nearer and keeping stronger the bonds of prejudice and selfishness? Does the exuberance of college spirit demand that in the theatre on a Hallow'een demonstration we interrupt the acts, we tear up paper and drop it on the luckless occupants of the pit? Is it the warmth of our college spirit or a confession of weakness that prevented us from hearing Mr. Willard and forced us to hear "The Telephone Girl," because that gentleman requested us simply to behave like gentlemen?

College spirit then is not mere enlightened selfishness nor yet a cosmopolitanism which makes one a friend of every one save his own. College spirit is a keen appreciation of our duty to our fellow students, to our fellow man, a seriousness of purpose which makes college life noble, a sympathy with others which makes co-operation easy and enjoyable, a determination to support college functions so far as consistent with the limitation of our funds and a proper devotion to books, a cheerful and gentlemanly bearing on all occasions and an abstinence from criticism of others. When the student-body of the University of Toronto, in all its relations, is imbued with this true college spirit then shall its strength and usefulness increase *velut arbor aevo*.
E. H. O.