

# THE 'VARSITY:

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF

## EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY POLITICS AND EVENTS.

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### THE START.

A few years ago, a series of brilliant essays appeared in the *New York Times*, which enhanced the reputation at once of the writer and of the paper. They were subsequently collected and published together in a single volume with the remarkable preface:—"I have been urged to unite these dissertations in book-form by the wishes of numerous and malignant enemies." By contrast are we reminded of this literary incident. The *'Varsity* starts on its career unattended by malevolence and amid the hearty "God-speed-you" of friends. The chief incentive, however, has not been encouragement, but the consciousness of a capability to supply what is beginning to be looked upon as a trustworthy indication of vigor and intensity of life in a university. We lay bare the spring of action with a reluctant hand, because exposition of motives is, not infrequently, mistaken for indulgence in an apologetic strain. An appeal to charitable forbearance would be sinister to any statement regarding the opportuneness of the *'Varsity's* appearance. If there is conviction as to such a statement having foundation in fact, then all color of extenuation should be bleached from the above-given exposition. Indifference to the misapprehension we have anticipated might also be taken to argue against adequacy of conception with respect to our proper sphere of employment. The present undertaking is meant to serve advantageously the general good of a community whose professed passport to consideration is intellectuality of character. The first impression conveyed by this declaration may be, that the claim advanced is pre-eminently arrogant; that the implied assumption of competence to act efficiently in this field of operation is destitute of any respectable warrant. We hasten with the corrective. The justness of the impression would be unimpeachable if the *'Varsity* presumed to pose as the guiding star, as the interpreter even, of a Canadian school-board, or of graduate and undergraduate humanity. In reality our intentions are very demure: not a guiding star, not an interpreter, but a *register* of opinion in and out of the University in matters of education; an unbiassed annalist of University life; and, in this last connexion, a strenuous advocate of what constitutes individual well-being. Efficiency from each of these points of view will demand from the undergraduates intellectual effort of no small significance. The maintenance also of a passable standard of excellence is not to be reasonably expected, unless such effort is supplemented by highly-participative exertion on the part of the graduates. Finally, there is needed the moral accessory of strongly-expressed sanction from the generation whose recollections of academic life have become gilded athwart the distance of many intervening years. Few will be disposed to detect extravagance in these stipulations; a close spirit of exaction would be inconsistent with the enlightenment of an auditory gathered round a prominent seat of learning. At most, insistence will be laid on the conventional engagements of full liberty of discussion and fair play—engagements which are entered upon in an earnest spirit of determination to abide by in these columns. At the same time we decline to offer a field for the exhibition of religious proclivities, and to afford an outlet to the ardency of youthful political partisans.

Set phrases and popular formulas, however acceptable to the multitude, act as irritants when appealing exclusively to an educated audience of men and women. Hence, in forecasting the course of the *'Varsity* the affection of very precise language has been discarded. Yet we have an avowal to make which barely escapes the stereotyped form: Whatever element of ambition or audacity lies latent in our programme, it is wholly bound up in the desire that the UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO shall possess the best university paper in America and an unrivalled index of the progress of educational systems.

On occasions like the CONVOCATION feast last June the toast, 'The Ladies,' is at best a mere sentimental variation of after-dinner oratory, and it was derogatory to the lady-students who obtained distinction in the examinations to be principally expatiated on only then. The proper place for the well-deserved allusions in their regard was in the toast, 'The Honor-Men of the Year.' If there happen to be honor women next May it is to be hoped this ungracious discrimination will not recur.

IN the course of one of his after-dinner speeches, on the same evening, Hon. EDWARD BLAKE remarked:—"I am glad to hear that there is a good prospect for placing, upon a sound foundation, the University paper. I am sure I need not do more than heartily commend that enterprise to the support of all the friends of this University, whether graduates or others. I hope all the old graduates will exhibit that interest in it which is involved in becoming subscribers, and seeing what the young men are doing in the way of work and of play as well." We not infrequently meet with men prolific in the language of sympathy; but few have our respected Chancellor's happy knack of giving a helping hand precisely at the right moment.

OF the changes in the constitution of the Literary and Scientific Debating Society, proposed and carried last April, Mr. LYDGATE'S Reform Bill bears the palm in comprehensiveness of character and force of disintegration. The discussion provoked, though of painful length, was certainly not out of proportion to the radical import of the subject. The measure was, in the opinion of its advocates, appropriate and opportune, principally because of the unwieldy bulk to which the Society had grown. Beyond a certain point, it was contended, increase of numbers is a fatal obstruction to the proceedings of an assembly when the *raison d'être* of its coming together is the debate. The greater the *raison d'être* of a meeting the more prolonged is the business preliminary to the chief object of the meeting. The presence of large numbers, also, often effectually daunts ambition to appear in the bema. The soundness of these general arguments, together with their application in the present instance, was not disputed; the opponents of the measure wisely contented themselves with assailing the proposed remedy and the remarkable special pleading which formed its attempted justification. Why the men of the Third and Fourth Years should be sacrificed, as they practically are by the employed division, to the interest of the first and second years is not obvious. It was urged by two or three of the speakers on Mr. LYDGATE'S side that the bashfulness of juvenile Undergraduates was not likely to be dispelled in the solemn presence of the members of the fourth years. The self-denying inference was drawn that Third Year men should henceforth act as monitors in the debating art for these delicately-reticent youths. Nevertheless a fair trial is to be given the scheme. It will certainly offer more opportunities for speaking at the Friday night meetings, though it will somewhat reduce the number of hearers. The Committee appointed to revise and harmonize the Constitution have already met several times, and will send in a report during the week. The complete recitation of the Bill is ready for the printer, and, after the adoption of the report, members should be able to procure a copy of the new Constitution within a few days. The many difficulties already obstructing the working of the new machinery will become insuperable, unless the members of the Society are in a position to know its intricacies.

### CO-EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

The question of the co-education of the sexes in Colleges for the training of adults is still a vexed one, and some time must elapse before it can be regarded as finally disposed of. Many who think it quite proper for boys and girls under a certain age, not only to pursue the same studies, but mingle together on the same play-ground at school, are strenuously opposed to a much more limited intermingling of the sexes at Colleges where the students are young men and women. They object on a variety of grounds which may, however, all be classed as physical, intellectual and moral.

They contend that woman is literally, in body, at all events, so much the "weaker vessel" that it would endanger the health of young ladies to attend the courses of lectures and go through the course of reading presented for young men undergoing collegiate training; and, by way of proof, they point to the many alleged instances of male students who have ruined their constitutions and shortened their lives by too close application to College work. Closely connected with this is the objection based on differences, assumed or proven, between the male and