

minutes we owned Yonge street, and then, as the clock in the fire hall tower struck eleven, we dispersed, and wended our way homewards. It was a great night. 'Rah for Alexander and Anderson. 'Rah for Varsity. 'Rah for "Esprit de Corps."

Como.

SOME OXFORD NOTES.

By A. E. Dwyer.

(Concluded).

These societies frequently have visitors from other colleges, who will, perhaps, take part in the discussion. When a Don reads a paper before a society, it means a crowd, if he is notable, probably a good attendance of the Dons of the college as well.

Of all the debating societies, the Oxford Union Society is the most important, both in numbers and general usefulness. It began in 1823, under the name of "The United Debating Society." To exclude turbulent members, it dissolved, on December 25th, and immediately reconstituted itself as the O.U.S. Its officers are President, Librarian, Senior and Junior Treasurer, and Secretary. In addition, there are a library committee and a standing committee. The valuable property of the society is vested in four trustees. When joining, a man is proposed by one, and seconded by two members; notice of this is posted, and if there is no demur, he becomes a member. Any member may demand a ballot, when one black ball in four excludes. After the entrance fee of one pound, there are nine terminal fees of one pound five, after which one becomes a life-member. The buildings of the society merit the highest praise. They are substantial, handsome, convenient, and comfortable. The Debating Hall is modeled on the House of Commons. Hung upon the walls are the portraits of former officers of the society, many of whom have become professors, politicians, diplomats, and great Church dignitaries. The library has 40,000 volumes, most of which may be taken out for a fortnight. Any member may suggest new books, but the final choice rests with the library committee. There are two writing-rooms, in one of which smoking is permitted. So great is the amount of correspondence on Sunday, that additional writing tables are arranged in the Debating-Hall. Stationery is supplied free of charge, and, with certain restrictions, postage also. The smoking-room is a fine chamber, with two magnificent fire-places, whose ruddy flames light up the rich, dark coloring of the walls, and the comfortable plush of sofas and easy-chairs. Here are the newspapers, chosen to suit the varying politics and tastes of the multitude. A magazine-room is well-supplied with the leading periodicals and reviews. Trinity University Review may be seen there, but I have not had the pleasure of seeing a copy of THE VARSITY. In both of these rooms one may have tea and coffee, and there is also a dining-room in connection with the society. The debates are held on Thursday evenings, and about once a term some distinguished speaker is invited to take part. A distinctive characteristic of Oxford debates is the weight given to points. An epigrammatic, incisive, personal attack, which keeps within the limits of parliamentary courtesy, is always well received. It is an error of man-

ner to be too much in earnest, and points often count more than argument, with solid breadth of application. At the same time any important omissions or defects of argument are quickly detected and keenly exposed.

There are few possible interests in life unrepresented by some society in Oxford: One dramatic society, three musical clubs, a brass-rubbing society, whose members go down on their knees to get black copies of the memorial brasses on church floors; a Republican society, now extinct (it had one Frenchman and one American), an aesthetic club, which once sat in a circle, gazing solemnly upon a candle, each member, in turn, giving a disquisition thereon, report says that one of their number once called a magnificent sunset a poor imitation of Turner. It is their joy to drink purple wine from green glasses, and their deepest aspiration to be intense. There is also a Jacobite society, in which everyone is said to be an officer. The varying social questions, which demand so much earnest attention, have also their devoted students, for the Christian Social Union, with a membership of 400, meets fortnightly for discussion, and has already, besides acting as a haven upon several generations of students, accomplished practical results of great value.

Oxford has a great advantage from its character as a meeting-place for people from all parts of the world; men from all the colonies, from India, from the Continent, and from the United States, here "foregather," as Kipling would say. As an attempt to make this practically helpful, socially, to members of the British Empire, who come over seas, a Colonial Club has been formed. It is intended to further mutual acquaintance and discussion of colonial interests, and has already held its first dinner, at which Mr. H. P. Biggar, an old Varsity man, read an extremely valuable paper on the three Colonial Conferences. It is probable that the Colonial Club has a future before it, and will be helpful in binding closer the widely-severed territories of the great British Empire.

One very important element in the distinctive character and influence of Oxford is the fact that nearly all who come up spend about two-thirds of their course in residence. It is not easy to over-estimate the effect of this. On one side it gives the Dons a chance of individual acquaintanceship, and a lever for the exercise of authority and influence, which they could procure by no other means. It is equally effective in giving the students a footing of acquaintanceship, and a speedy and thorough acclimatization in the traditions, not only of general university life, but also of that particular college of which he has become a member. This has many advantages. It is the active cause which leads the great world to choose an Oxford or Cambridge man, not only for his accredited scholarship, but also as the happy possessor of university culture. Then, without destroying the compactness of a great institution, it prevents a man from feeling himself an unnoticed individual amongst such a multitude of souls. The little world of the college gives exercise to that side of a man's nature which demands a domestic atmosphere, while the broader world of the university gives scope for the exercise of those special tastes which demand companionship from the few selected out of the many, and allows free opportunity for the acquirement of that breadth of knowledge which only the many specialists of a great university can give.