

such works rests chiefly on the senior students and it reflects no credit on those students who are not only members of higher classes but are under obligation to the student body for positions of honor and trust in other societies, that they shirk their responsibility in this one. It is not very complimentary to the society that certain of its members deign to favor it with their presence perhaps once a session, inflict their speech on the patient listeners and absent themselves thereafter. Nor is it very encouraging for the society that certain other of its members attend during their good pleasure, or so long as it proves entertaining for them, and forsake it when it needs a helping hand or voice to make it entertaining. There are some students in this institution, we are sorry to say, who regard it as an obligation incumbent upon some undefined power to carry on the work of all societies for their convenience and who do a great deal of fault finding if the course of affairs does not conform to their fastidious tastes; yet they never conceive the possibility of a duty on their part to contribute to the common weal. The Debating Society should watch jealously that kind of thing and ostracize all parasites and drones. It should cultivate a spirit of hostility towards this absenteeism and thus enforce attendance, if not through honor at least through shame.

Why there is this indifference on the part of so many to the work of the society we cannot understand, for if there is one society more than another that is deserving of the support and encouragement of students, it is certainly the Debating Society. Everyone knows how almost indispensable it is as a training for the tongue. There are many students, sound, intelligent and generally well informed, who yet fail utterly to impress you, out of sheer inability to deliver themselves of their ideas. They are able perhaps to wield the pen with force and even elegance, yet they could not stand up in a committee of three and express themselves without discomfiture to themselves and their hearers. Knowledge is power only as it can be wielded. This is a talking age, and if we wish to live in it and with it we must learn to talk. Let no one say, however, that the benefits of this work con-

sist wholly in acquiring a glibness of speech; it is preeminently a training for the mind. One learns to be cool, to calculate swiftly, to be alert, keen and logical, and to marshal his powers in the most formidable array. Besides this, it is an incentive to thought. There is nothing more invigorating to the intellect than an intellectual wrestle. Many an alumnus who has since made his mark in the world will tell you that it was in the debating society he first began to really think for himself and to dare to express an independent opinion, and that it was there he first conceived a manly, serious interest in the study of deeper problems. There is certainly no more practical work for the student than that done by the Debating Society. There he receives a foretaste of the cares and strifes of future life, and learns to apply to them the principles with which he is being imbued by a liberal education.

Although the work accomplished this year is very creditable it seems to us there should be something done to give this feature of our college work more prominence. It is too much a matter of routine; there is not that enthusiasm in it that there should be. Can there not be some means devised to revive interest in it? Now we put our football team and our baseball, hockey and lacrosse teams into leagues to compete with outsiders in order that the keenness of competition may arouse and sustain enthusiasm in physical culture. Will not the same principle hold good in the matter of mental culture? In fact the importance of the principle has already been recognized and applied in the Intercollegiate debates which are becoming so popular. There is no reason why we should not take part in these debates. If any are so timid or diffident as to think that because our neighboring universities are larger and richer they produce abler men, let them remember that our students take first places in them, that our graduates are as successful men, and that our college publication, even though *THE OWL*, do say it, takes second place to none of them. We could without any doubt make a creditable showing. We are already the easy champions of the field in Canada, could we not also become the champions