

THE VARSITY.

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TORONTO, November 5, 1902.

THE accounts in the city papers of the Hallowe'en proceedings have been very unjust to the students. The Star alone took the trouble to learn both sides of the matter, and even here the prominence given the affair was far from being justified by the facts. In no other paper, however, was space given to the case the students have against the police for wanton officiousness and stupid brutality.

Let it be understood, in the first place, that, as students, we demand no more and will accept no less liberty than is accorded other citizens. With the destruction of property we have no sympathy. The student who engages in such a proceeding cannot complain if he is arrested and fined; nor is a student justified in banging a sign with a cane, although, as a matter of fact, if the city by-law in reference to signs was strictly enforced they would not afford so tempting a target for canes.

It is true that in the march to the theatre some signs were injured, and presumably by students. If we are to believe the interested parties, the damage so caused was ruinous in extent. The valorous defenders of the peace stood idly by, it seems, while 500 wicked students wrecked ruin on the costly (jewelled, one would think, from the estimates) signs of the tradespeople, and only woke up in time to swoop down upon two timorous young Freshmen who had been meekly content to bring up the rear of the procession. In the Police Court the next morning the most serious offence that could be laid to their charge was that of damaging a sign to the extent of 25c. What became of the real offenders? Why were they not arrested?

With the disturbance on Yonge street, near Eaton's, after the theatre, we are prepared to establish conclusively that the students of the three Faculties of the University of Toronto, Arts, Science and Medicine, had no part whatever. On the other hand, we can prove that the students of these Faculties were subjected to cowardly and outrageous treatment by a stupid, or worse, constabulary.

Take the case of the medical students. All the students of this Faculty, as Dr. Reeve has publicly declared, were his guests at a dinner which is held annually in the gymnasium. They left that building about 11 o'clock in company with several members of the Faculty, and moved through the park towards College street, out of which most of them had to pass to reach their homes. It is clear that they were doing nothing which violated any law or by-law whatever. As they came out on College street, suddenly, without the slightest warning, they were attacked by five mounted policemen, who rode down and trampled with their horses inoffending men, and lashed right and left with their heavy rawhide whips. The long list of student casualties in Saturday's Star is speaking evidence of the

brutality of this assault. We are glad to know that Dean Reeves will insist on an investigation and redress.

The School of Science men, accompanied by the Arts Freshmen, were assaulted in a like unprovoked and savage manner while returning up University avenue from the theatre. They were making their way towards the University, in the immediate vicinity of which all had their rooms, and to which all student processions return before dispersing, when the police charged them and tried to drive them back towards the city.

A small body of Second Year Arts men were walking up College street on the way to the University, where they were holding a dinner. They were charged upon by three mounted policemen, one of whom rode his horse right up on the sidewalk amongst them, the while using most abusive and insulting language.

Many other cases are reported where officers used their batons and whips on men who were quietly trying to get out of the crowd. One student was clubbed by an officer in plain clothes, and on complaining to a sergeant of police was lashed across the face with a whip. Two other students were standing on Adelaide street, when, without the least warning, one was struck on the neck with an officer's baton. Trinity reports the case of a student who received a villainous blow in the face from a policeman, while merely standing in front of his own boarding house on Winchester street. For cowardly and unprovoked violence on the part of the police Friday night's proceedings hold the record.

We have reason to believe that the unlawful acts, to which the newspapers have given prominence, were not the acts of University students. Is policeman evidence to the contrary reliable?

In the disturbances resulting from the Street Railway strike a great deal of damage was done and numerous arrests were made. In no case, according to the jury's finding, at the many recent trials, did it appear that the person arrested was one of the persons who did the damage. The inference is plain. Policemen are fallible either in streets or in the witness box.

Nor do recent events exalt the policeman's reputation for intelligence in the performance of his duties. Within the last six months fourteen highway robberies have been committed within the precincts or immediate vicinity of Toronto and not one arrest has been made. The porch-climbers still ply their merry trade while the police are busy catching Freshmen who belabor 25c. signs.

From the general attitude of the police on Friday night it is quite evident that, chagrined at these glaring evidences of their own incompetence, they determined to precipitate a conflict with the students—make as many arrests as possible—and so bolster up their shattered reputations.

We would ask the citizens of Toronto to take the stories of the police with a liberal grain of salt. The students of the University of Toronto refuse to be drawn into a controversy with the police. THE VARSITY would deplore anything which might disturb those amicable relations which have so long existed between our students and the citizens of Toronto. We are sure that our men are not responsible for anything which occurred on Friday night that could have such an effect.

On the other hand, such tactics as those of the police on Hallowe'en provoke rather than quell disturbances, and while University men desire only peace, they have no intention of being bullied by a lot of ruffians whether they wear a policeman's coat or not.