

THE VARSITY

A Weekly Journal of Literature, University Thought and Events

VOL. XXI.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, FEBRUARY 25, 1902.

No. 17

STUDENT LIFE AT OXFORD.

(Extracts from a letter received by Dr. S. M. Wickett from E. J. Kyle, '01, winner of the J. W. Flavelle travelling scholarship in Classics).

The Oxford Union is indeed a fine organization. It comprises three buildings,—a large and perfectly fitted debating-hall, the walls of which are covered with excellent photographs of distinguished members; a very complete library of some fifty thousand volumes; a third building containing reading, writing, coffee and billiard rooms and bulletin-boards. The membership is very large, and hence the whole club is well managed. Since coming here I have availed myself of all the advantages offered, and have particularly enjoyed the Thursday evening debates. The subjects for discussion are all political in nature, and are argued with great vigor, first by four chosen speakers, and then by any who wish to take part. The future of the Liberal party, "Joe" Chamberlain, and Gen. Buller, have so far been the objects of debate. The fellows are Conservative or Liberal from the first moment of their life here. I know of no more hopeful sign for the future of England than this general interest shown by its young men in the political life of the nation. Would that the tradition—I believe that it is nothing more—which forbids the free discussion of political questions in the University of Toronto Literary Society were forced to discontinue its evil influence! The war and the government come in for the most scathing criticism here. In a vote taken a week ago at the Union the war policy was in the majority by no more than five votes. My college, Balliol, is intensely Liberal. The freedom with which opinion is expressed is invigorating after the tin-horn loyalty so prevalent in Canada.

Residence life is delightful. For about an hour last night, however, it seemed rather more exciting than otherwise. A few of the fellows had a "wine," became a little merry, and proceeded to wreck the next staircase to mine. Every few minutes the stillness of the night was punctuated by the crash of glassware meeting the stone walls. I was quite relieved this morning to find my goods still intact. Such occurrences are quite exceptional, because Balliol is a most respectable spot. I have enjoyed the social life ever so much; breakfast, and tea, and coffee after dinner, and indeed the public dinner itself—in the great hall, bring the men constantly together. The men themselves are of course interesting to me. They show the usual type-form, but as a whole take life more easily and lay more emphasis on social intercourse than do Canadian students. They work all morning, take exercise in the afternoon, and are satisfied with three hours reading after five o'clock tea.

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What need is there of my telling you aught of the historical interest of Oxford, or of its manifold beauties?

Only a visit here could enable you to appreciate either. The longer one lives here, the more the charm of the place grows upon him,—the old grey stone colleges and churches, the quaint narrow streets, the broad playing-fields, the fair rivers, and the peaceful English country lying about it all.

"ANTIGONE" AS SEEN BY "THE SHADE OF SOPHOCLES."

The shade of Sophocles, sweet singer of Colonus, and son of Sophillus I am. No longer do I behold the day-star's sacred eye, but for my fate no tear is shed, no friend makes moan. No more do I receive that meed of praise which in the olden-times the ten generals, appointed by Apsephion, awarded me 'gainst Aeschylus. But ever since I broke my voice and snapped the thread of life and went down to the house of Hades, to the great meadow anon in the revolving hours I come again to the bright light of the sun, and haunt the lecture rooms where sophists teach for pay and young men and maidens with dancing black eyes sit together, and bitter cries float around me; wretched man that Sophocles, the son of Sophillus was, he that wrote the choruses, exceeding hard to translate. Then break I forth with my thin ghostlike voice. "Woe, woe! I thrill with dread. Is there none to strike me to the heart with two-edged sword? O, miserable that I am and steeped in miserable anguish." Many other strange customs have these barbarians, and my soul sinks within me as they chatter their ineffectual stuff about low and high stages. But most of all do they err in the choruses, for while in our land we sing and say them rapidly, in their halls and lecture rooms they stumble and hesitate like the voices of birds lamenting. Now it came to pass that two barbarians, Shaw and Torrington, conspired to bring forth the last part of my trilogy, my Antigone. Now, this to me did seem exceeding strange, for in our land when a play has been once given it is very seldom repeated, and I am told that before I came to this city that at two places in the town it had already been given. And I also wondered much at the time of the year for the Dionysia had not yet arrived, but one of the young men standing by, of whom I enquired, said it was the custom in their land to have plays throughout almost the whole of the year. "It is no wonder then, I said, that you have great prosperity, railroads and steamships such as are not seen in our land." "How so?" said he. "Because in the solemn national and religious festivals of the dramas you are ever worshipping the gods. We are wont to say that in our land the great god Dionysus loves the dramas."

"It is not so in our land," replied the youth, "unless it be that some in our great theatres do worship Bacchus. This, however, is only between acts."

"Acts," said I, "and what are they?"