

The University Girl

By Margaret Bell.

Just twenty-five years ago, the massive doors of Toronto University swung open for the first reception to women students; the long halls formerly so unpopulated, so coldly radiant upon the mention of women's entrance, now pecked a welcome—and for a quarter of a century, those same old corridors have echoed and re-echoed with the sound of women's subdued voices. And strange as it may seem, it is whispered that the cold, austere countenance of the old gray walls have become miraculously softened in that lapse of time.

At the graduating exercises the next year, five young women received the Bachelor of Arts degree, one of these being Miss Brown, daughter of the late Honorable George Brown, who won the gold medal in general proficiency, as a precedent of what her sex could do, and later, also, as an example of what a woman graduate is best fitted for, married Professor Barbour of Edinburgh.

And so their life went on, each year adding a few more to the list of women students, each year showing plainly that women are quite capable of competing with her strong brother for

even out of reach of the Rhodes scholarship man.

How they do this, they alone know, for there must be an immense amount of "plugging," immediately before examinations, judging from the clutch the society part of their life seems to have on them. But the be all and end all of the average student's course seems to be to grasp that coveted "sheepskin" at the end of four struggling (?) years, and then immediately to forget all it required to secure it. It always reminds me of a long fast, then a most unchristian gormandizing. The system is able to absorb a much greater amount, but the reaction must come—acute indigestion of all the ancient Homeric and more modern Gaudier ballads. The suffering student will endeavor to forget all the nerve-racking vials, will busy herself in numerous other recreations—and in a short time, will find herself unable to conjugate even the simple "amo," which, in the true phase of its meaning, is not so simple after all. This is not mere supposition. I have learned of repeated cases where the week preceding the examination has found girls up all night endeavoring to cram their craniums with the things which should



TORONTO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS LEAVING FOR HOME.

scholastic honors. The different colleges became affiliated, Victoria in 1892 and Trinity in 1904, until St. Michael's was erected in 1888. Victoria built for her girls, Amherst, and South Halls shortly after being recognized as an integral part of the institution. These residences accommodating about one hundred, and University College followed in 1905, with Queen's Hall, which caters to the whims of fifty-one. These halls have been always building over with girls; from the time of their erection till the present there have been "girls, girls, nothing but girls," with their chafing-fishers, their club meetings, merry "sundae parties" and more dignified receptions, their secrets and affairs du coeur, for always girls will be girls. One of these elusive creatures, on being asked her opinion of the matter, replied, between munches of fudge, "Well, I'm going after my degree, but if the right man comes along, I'll take him and let the degree go," which eyes to show that girl's mind invariably trend in one direction for the ultimate finish of their course. Be she Bachelor of Arts or of crafts, she is always, a co-star with the inevitable "him" to share her joys and sorrows, and culinary creations.

They live here in the different residences a big, happy family, each willing and anxious to help the other in whatever way she can, be it the solution of a difficult mathematical problem, the translation of a knotty passage of "The Idylls," or the reimbursement of some entangled borrowing of young erratic Dan.

Upon visiting Queen's Hall one morning, I had the pleasure of meeting a young student who entered the reception-room humming amiably a book on which I saw, printed, "Algebra." I asked her if this was her favorite subject, and received a decided negative; and regarding the subject was told that "This had a little bit of everything but too much of all of it." This was in the general course. Many people imagine that this course is a "dead end" or something else you may wish to call it, which sounds more dignified. But this young lady had two more mathematics besides the detested algebra along with sciences, languages and all the rest. Nothing is really a "ouch" if you go about it in the right way. I also learned that many of the girls in Queen's Hall prefer mathematics and science, which are reasonably regarded as being appropriate outlets for the mind element. But in preferring these lines of study, they do not neglect every year showing a standing among the girls as their brothers-in-profession. Even if girls are not fitted with all the superhuman brain-power required to line up all night for the heavenly task of purchasing tickets "on spec" for some mammoth football game—a most admirable cause to be sure—they are still able to line up and take their share of mathematics and utilization of the tickets after the persevering enthusiast has procured them.

Each and figures, statistical proofs of the efficiency in these subjects, and the medals and scholarships during the "heat-out" during all the years, have been carried away by equally as many girls as men, sometimes more in proportion, the governor-general's medal in 1906 being won by Miss Knight, who swept the honors

The "hazing" problem is one every university has to fight. What started it, anyway? I don't deny for one moment that it is an excellent coach for some of the conceited, mamma-petted little dears who leave home for the first time, and bring with them the

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Idea that they will at once grasp the golden sceptre and rule supreme, as they did in the little home town. Nine out of ten are of this type. And the majority of the students are from places outside Toronto. How are they going to learn that there are a few struggling bits of knowledge beating around this wise old orb which, as yet, have not come within reach of their ken? How find out that the standards all over the world are not the same as they were back there in the embryonic metropolis? Most decidedly one of the most efficient teachers, if not the most pleasant, is a good chastisement on a mock stage or law court. But the old law of "Plus il a, plus il desir" still remains in the heart of every conqueror, until like the ancient barbarians, they will stop at not even the most brutal and ridiculous forms of "hazing."

We would expect the girls to use much milder means than their mighty brothers. Which is the case here. The freshmen—how the name fits!—among the girls are not submitted to such harrowing mortifications as are the boys. Is this not another case of pure evolution? They seem to have a

higher idea of the fitness of things. Their initiation is not so very unpleasant, and some of the part I was informed of is educational in the extreme. I'll not divulge the secret, however. These seniors might never let you off so easy again. But that light haze does you good, doesn't it? And, more than that, it establishes a bond of sisterly friendship, for the very ones who are proving your own torturers had to go thru the very same humiliation themselves. And, after it all, you can stand up and shake hands with them and proclaim yourselves full-fledged varsity girls. And the joys which open their doors to you then! Think of the merry romps together, the fascinating solution of problems, the chafing-dish parties, the scraps, the jealousies! Think how you will be able to decorate your room with the noble blue and white! The pennants you may purchase, the class pins? And the stern matrons you will have to dodge? Oh, I declare, girls, there's nothing like it! It's glorious, glorious!

I was rather surprised to learn that the general spirit in Queen's Hall was anti-suffragist. After the long golden streamers artistically pictured in the

"Votes for Women" which fluttered so gracefully from the shoulders of some dozen gowned maidens one night not long ago, in Massey Hall, I expected to see mottoes all over the place, bearing the same awe-inspiring signal. On mentioning the fact, I learned that the ones who are particularly desirous of the privilege of casting a ballot are, for the most part, among the medical students. They seem very enthusiastic that night in Massey Hall. But probably, like many more of us, they were under the spell of the moment. That's where environment comes in, that mysterious force which is at all times so difficult to overcome. Don't mix too much with your 51 Queen's Hall sisters, or your environment in the other direction may prove equally as hard to overcome, and the beautiful streamers will become a mere myth.

A most praiseworthy ambition was that of a young student who was desirous of training for a nurse, but, not content with idly "killing time" till she might enter, came to Toronto, to attend university, in order to fit herself better for her future duties. It seems to me that is an excellent objective, and of us. Some of us

have the mistaken idea that the pursuit of any course is simply to get thru with it in as short time as possible, and to "get busy," utilizing it as a mere means toward livelihood. Surely one cannot conceive of a more unfair measure to deal oneself or the community. This girl has the right idea. She wants to fit herself for any sphere. Then, after securing a broad education, she will specialize in her one desirable line. The trouble of most specialists is that they begin to specialize long before they are ready. With the result they are either a monstrous bluff or a dismal failure.

The majority of the girls, I fear, are not quite so ambitious as this one. Fact is, most of them have no ambition at all. They say they cannot bear to think of leaving varsity and going back to their small towns to "mildew." Not wishing to use their acquired knowledge toward a means of livelihood—which, alone, is a very poor use, to be sure—they have nothing to do but return to those little towns and waste their time. Could you imagine a more serious state of affairs? The girls are obviously the ones who spend their time in the pursuit of this or that pleasure. What a will-o-

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