

THE VARSITY

A Weekly Journal of Literature, University Thought and Events.

VOL. X.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, FEBRUARY 17, 1891.

No. 16.

Editorial Comments.



THE action of the committee which has in hand the printing of the revised constitution of the Literary and Scientific Society has been balked for the present by the discovery that the clauses relating to the membership and the franchise are almost inextricably confused. This confusion has arisen from a series of circumstances for which no one in particular is to blame. Some years ago, when the University of Toronto was a less complex institution, and when University College was alone entrusted with the teaching department, the University confining itself to examining, the position of students in the University and their consequent eligibility or ineligibility for membership in the Literary Society was a comparatively simple question to decide. With the exception of a few students taking the LL.B. course (who, moreover, were generally graduates in Arts), every undergraduate was a student in Arts and attended lectures at University College. The Society was, therefore, an Arts society, and in fact, as well as in name, a University College society.

But changes came in the organization of the University which it seems to have baffled the ingenuity of constitution-builders to follow. The Toronto Medical School was changed into the Medical Faculty of the University of Toronto. Here were two or three hundred new students who, though they had nothing to do with University College (for the School still continued to teach), were yet undergraduates of the University and, as such, became immediately, without any change in the wording of the constitution, eligible for membership in the Society. An effort was made to change the constitution so as to include them and keep the Society, as it had been before, in the hands of the students in Arts. But the idea of an all-embracing undergraduate society prevailed. The medicals retained their membership and the name, "University College Literary and Scientific Society," became a misnomer—a greater misnomer after the students of the School of Science were admitted, for they have never had anything to do with University College,—a still greater misnomer after the passing of the University Federation Act, which made confusion worse confounded. The McMillans, the Higginsons, the MacNamaras, the Coatsworths and the Waldrons might "kick on the constitution," but they failed to make it consistent with the legal status of the University. First, the University was given teaching powers in certain departments which were withdrawn from the college. The result is that students in Arts who take Mathematics, Natural Science and Political Science, which are "University Subjects," have nothing to do with University College, are not attending lectures there, any more than are the medicals, and therefore have no vote, for undergraduate offices in the Society, under the franchise clause. Again, provision was made in the Act for the affiliation with the University of a number of surrounding institutions such as Knox College and Wycliffe. Students registered in these colleges, and paying fees there, may attend lectures in the University of Toronto, but they have nothing to do with University College, and moreover are not necessarily undergraduates of the University itself. So that they are not only excluded from voting by the franchise clause as it now stands, but are not members of the Society at all. The same is true of the students of certain other institutions, such as the Guelph Agricultural

College, the School of Dentistry and the College of Music. These of course have never been considered members, but there is as good reason to do so as in the case of that species of person known as "literary men" in Knox; and there is this further fact, that while the University grants no degrees in Theology it *does* grant degrees in Agriculture and Dentistry, so that under the graduate clause the graduates from those institutions are members. This, surely, is carrying the joke too far and certainly was not intended.

Such is the confusion—a confusion, it must be remembered, for which the recent changes in the wording of the constitution are not in the least to blame, unless it be in the last mentioned phase of the graduate qualification. Those changes created no new difficulties. By removing the ceremony of nomination and election, and basing the membership in theory, as it had always been in fact, immediately upon the standing of students in the university, they simply laid bare difficulties which had, at bottom, existed from the first. The Society may have walked by faith and not by sight in accepting amendments in reference to membership, but the bog in which it stands constitutionally is the same old bog nevertheless—with the underbrush cleared away. How then are matters to be set right? One thing is certain. All reference to University College or the students who attend there must be removed. For if by that term is meant the building (as the framers of the old constitution seem in some places to have intended) there is no record kept of the students in Arts, Medicine, Law, Practical Science, etc., who take lectures under its roof. If more properly, we mean by University College that corporate body of men engaged in teaching certain subjects it must be remembered that only a portion even of the students in Arts have anything to do with them. Shall we say, then, "undergraduates in Arts, Medicine and Law" as the designation of undergraduate members? That might be satisfactory were it not for the fact that a number of those whom we wish to be members are non-matriculants, and therefore not undergraduates. It would also throw out the Knox and Wycliffe men who take a few lectures in the University, but do not intend to take a degree and are not now undergraduates.

The above is a plain statement of the existing state of affairs, a state which can, we believe, be remedied best by the fullest discussion of the subject by the members of the Literary Society. We can only hope that the members will give the matter their "most serious consideration," and each assist as best he may in arriving on the night of the 27th at a final and satisfactory decision.

EXCHANGE NOTES.

The *Nassau Literary Magazine*, of Princeton, always receives a hearty welcome at the Sanctum. The last number is an unusually good one. It is filled with sparkling bits of verse, interesting editorial matter and several charming short stories. "A Study in Terra Cotta" is the best thing in the number, and is a most delightful piece of reading. We should like to see many more such stories in college journals. We must remark, however, that the use of that word "fiancée," under the circumstances, does not commend itself to us.

The Yale navy is to have a new launch that can make fourteen miles an hour.