

Contributions.

THEATRICAL CLUBS AT HARVARD.

The success which attended the production of the *Rudens* of Plautus by the classical club, and the interest in theatricals which this has aroused in McGill, may make a short description of the several theatrical clubs at Harvard not inopportune. These clubs have in most cases been started as social clubs only, theatricals have then been introduced as a means of amusement for the members, and to serve as entertainments for their friends. The outside world hears of the clubs only when they give plays, so that they come to be regarded by many as existing for that object only.

The most widely known and most influential club of this nature is the "Hasty Pudding." It was founded in 1795, "to cherish the feelings of friendship and patriotism." The name of the club is derived from the stipulation in the original constitution that "two members in alphabetical order shall provide a pot of hasty pudding for every meeting." The first entertainments of the club were debates between the members. Before the end of the last century these were superseded by mock trials before the club's "High Court of Equity," which assumed unlimited jurisdiction over historical and contemporary personages. Some of the cases tried by this court such as "The Human Race, plaintiff, vs. Adam, defendant," for "Wantonness in eating the woeful apple"; "Aeneas vs. Dido"; "Caesar vs. Brutus"; "Charles I. vs. Cromwell," etc., must have been very amusing as well as instructive. After these mock trials had been held for nearly fifty years, the costumes and make-ups of the judges and witnesses becoming more and more elaborate, it was felt that a play of the nature of a comic opera would offer more scope for ingenuity and striking effects. Theatricals were accordingly introduced and have proved immensely popular. The following quotation from an address delivered at the Hasty Pudding centennial will give some idea of the enthusiasm infused into these plays:

"For fifty years the theatricals of this club have had an individuality, a freshness, a vigor, that has been all their own. For a long time they were without imitation, and until very lately have been without rivalry. The naturalness of the Pudding's actors, the audacity of their parodies of the formal and the accepted, the ridiculous ingenuity of their stage business, together with the unbounded enthusiasm of the cast, principals and chorus, make their performances perennial successes, whether before the cheering graduates here, or upon the public stage in Boston or New York."

The members of the pudding are taken only from the senior class in the faculty of Arts and Sciences, this gives about four hundred and thirty men to draw from, four hundred of these being in arts. The full membership of the club is eighty, however, before the close of the college year forty men are elected from the junior year, so that at one time there are one hundred and twenty members. The members are chosen ten at a time, for instance the forty men who form the nucleus in the fall choose ten more, these fifty choose ten more, and so on until the full membership has been reached. It is considered a great honor to be among the first ten chosen for the pudding. The club has a commodious house close to the college yard, one of the features being a fine library, collected during their century's existence; another feature is the row of beer mugs hanging around the large arch over the fire place. In addition to the usual appointments of a social club, there is a very complete theatre, sufficiently large to hold probably one-third as many as the Academy of Music in Montreal.

In connection with the Pudding must be mentioned the "Institute of 1770." It was founded in 1771, and had for its original object the practice of oratory among its members. It has passed through many vicissitudes of fortune and has frequently changed its name. For many years prior to 1892, it existed as a chapter of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity. It gradually lost sympathy with the other chapters and in that year separated from them entirely. As now constituted the society is called the "In-