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Editorial Comments.



SOME ONE, whose name we do not recollect at present, has called man a microcosm, a world in himself, small indeed as contrasted with the greater world outside him, yet essentially complete. Now if this be true of the individual, much more can we affirm it of a collective body of men. No one can pass any length of time in such an institution as our University without having deeply impressed upon his mind this truth, that we have here a reproduction on a small scale of the great external world.

It would be interesting to follow out this comparison in its minuter ramifications; but such a task we shall not attempt, well satisfied if we can but lay hold of one of the more salient features of resemblance. Well do we remember the buoyant hope, the eager enthusiasm (now ours, alas! no longer) that thrilled our hearts when first we entered on our university career. It was indeed a new world which we were just approaching, and the feelings that were roused within us were such as we can suppose were roused in the bosom of Columbus four hundred years ago, when he too first beheld the new world of the west. Our mind peopled this terra incognita with airy phantoms of our own creation, just as the early discoverers of America were haunted by dreams of uncounted treasures of silver and gold and fountains of everlasting youth.

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

But the progress of geographical exploration soon put an end to these quixotic hopes of the early voyagers; and so too, alas! those roseate visions we had conjured up were doomed to disappointment.

Pray do not pause here to call us a pessimist or to remark that we have probably been plucked; but kindly suspend judgment till you have heard us out. We are not a pessimist, and whether we have been plucked or not is like the flowers that bloom in the spring. Nay, we regard this disillusionment as a necessary step in the path of true progress. No man would be content to remain forever in the fairy-world of infancy, and yet it is not without regret that we first come to realize that Santa Claus and all the other worthies who blessed our childhood are myths and unrealities whom sober judgment compels us to surrender. And so too in this little world of ours, which we call Toronto University, the laying aside of imaginary and impracticable hopes is the first step in the advance to higher and truer realities.

This experience, in our humble opinion, is one of the greatest benefits which university life bestows. We are brought down from our reveries in cloudland to hard facts,

which cannot well be idealized, but must be dealt with as they are. Perhaps we started out with the idea of accomplishing some wonderful revolution during our Varsity career, such, for example, as the abolition of "hustling;" if so, we soon find what an obstacle stands in the way in the *vis inertia* of the majority of the students—an obstacle too great for aught save the College Council to remove. No doubt we feel somewhat grieved when first we come to recognize how small our influence really is; but is it not better to have gained this experience in our small world than to have waited till the rude shock of the great outside world startled us from our dreams?

Nor must we be disheartened when this revelation has come to us. It is an important step in advance for us to learn how small our influence is; it is a still more important step in advance for us to learn how great our influence is. When we have taken the first of these steps we cease to dream of ourselves as knights-errant, going to and fro and performing wondrous deeds before the admiring gaze of our fellows; when we have taken the second we come to look upon ourselves as men who have a part, albeit only a very common every-day part, to play in the great drama of human life. We recognize that the great onward movements of humanity recorded in history are the result of the conjunction of innumerable individual influences, directed indeed by some master mind, but impelled by the united wills and energies of all. We recognize that our influence, small though it be, yet turned in the right direction and added to that of countless others, becomes a sharer in that resistless force of human progress before which all things else must be swept away. And recognizing this, it becomes our solemn duty to see to it that our influence is used in the cause of right.

Surely, then, an institution which can teach us this lesson, from whose portals we can go forth into the greater world already having acquired this experience, and therefore able to take our stand in life as befits true men, surely such an institution needs no higher commendation. Many indeed are the benefits our Alma Mater bestows upon us; but none greater than this, that she teaches us, if we will but read aright the lesson of experience, to cease to be idle dreamers and to become men of vigorous thought and not less vigorous action.

In a brief article of our last issue we referred with more or less pride to the new library. Since the number appeared we have received a letter touching an important omission—no mention was made of the mutilation of the equipment. Already the men have commenced to mar the new fittings in the various ways which a perverted ingenuity never fails to devise. Some are seeking immortality through their ability in the art of Pygmalion—though we are slow to believe that if, like Galatea, their productions were imbued with life, the artists would willingly wed their