

Our debating society for the past two or three years has not had that attention which is necessary for a society of this kind. Financial embarrassment and difficulties which arose tended to prevent matters from moving on smoothly. However, the last term seemed to issue in with it omens of prosperity, and at the beginning of a new year we are again able to look the world in the face. A good interest was manifested during last term, and the debates were of an interesting nature. Considering the great benefit derived from this part of our education, which, when properly pursued, is second to none of our studies, we feel that, in the ensuing term, the members will not neglect the society for amusement. You, who think it not worth while to spend an hour or two in cultivating a taste for public speaking, may sometime be quite humiliated by a defeat from some stripling who has given a little attention to this art. At this time, when graduates are supposed to be perfect automatons in the way of public speaking, it is necessary to give enough attention to this matter to avoid ridicule in any future attempt.

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### *Chalmers, the Student and Professor.*

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The history of the early life of a great man is considered an essential part of his biography. Not unfrequently, it is the most interesting part, and that which leads to most controversy, inasmuch as men here search for the beginning of those influences which, operating upon the youthful nature, produced the impress which afterwards characterized the man. Thus school and college life, because of their supposed future significance, are invested with peculiar interest. Whether or no, these really do determine the man, whether that which is taken as indication in a certain direction is in essence such an indication, whether the present establishes more than the future modifies, are questions to which, perhaps, experience can give no uniform answer; but it is at least true, that the school presents a great variety of character, and that the distinctive qualities there exhibited tend towards, and frequently produce, a distinct development in after life.

Aside from general human differences, stu-

dents differ widely as *students*;—a fact observable, not only in intellectual capacity and diligence, but in the very motives inducing study.

Some have no motive, and are students only in name; a larger class work, more or less, simply in obedience to custom; others in whom ambition is so aroused that *to excel* is to them both meat and drink, bend all their energies to win a prize or lead a class, or to be called clever; others, by a forced submission, yield themselves to the training necessary for a profession; and again, there are a few to whom the work itself supplies a sufficient motive, whose minds find in certain subjects an affinity which manifests itself in quiet devoted interest or exuberant enthusiasm.

Of this latter class Thomas Chalmers was a remarkable example. But this enthusiasm did not appear in his early school days; on the contrary, though sent to school at the age of three years, up to his fourteenth year he was a somewhat idle boy. Yet he liked to go to school, not, however, because he was fond of his book, but because even a dingy school-room, with occasional confinement in the coal-hole, was heaven compared to hanging on the apron strings of a disagreeable nurse. Having learned to read, the books which charmed him most were *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gaudentia di Lucra*.

At the age of twelve he went to St. Andrews, where for two years he in no wise distinguished himself, except, perhaps, in a generous disposition and fondness for sports. But the third year was his "intellectual birth-time." The teacher of Mathematics at that time was Dr. Brown, who possessed the happy faculty of inspiring his pupils with a love for their work and affection for himself. Dr. Chalmers himself says that to him he was indebted for whatever Academic enthusiasm he possessed, and that he, more than any other teacher, helped to form his tastes and habits.

The ardour with which he pursued this favorite study amounted almost to a passion; nevertheless, under the influence of his teachers, to which he was always very susceptible, he also took up the study of ethics and politics, which resulted in a passionate admiration for the principles of Godwin's Political Philosophy, and a repudiation of the Fogysm