

AN ASSEMBLY HALL.

There is scarcely any one need of the University more pressing than that of an assembly hall adequate to its demands, and to its very reasonable demands. It is very hard to maintain the *esprit du corps* of a body of students who never for once even are assembled in their own building and on their own campus. The enthusiasm and the inspiration that come from the occasional mass meetings is worth everything in student experiences. Without such meetings it is almost impossible to maintain the keen recognition of solidarity of interest which is so necessary to the highest and most satisfactory university life. The loyalty of the students is without question great and increasing; but it is hard to secure and maintain this when students have practically no opportunity to look each other in the faces and to feel all the quickening that comes from numbers. All men recognize the desirability of such gatherings of those who have, or ought to have community of feeling. It is at the bottom of all the efforts in every political campaign—if one takes no higher or better example.

The stated occasions on which such a hall is imperatively necessary are many. The daily morning prayers, or "chapel," as it has always been called, should be an assembly of the entire University family. Though these exercises are, and always have been entirely voluntary as to attendance, the present assembly room (which will seat about five hundred and fifty, and these none too comfortably) is not at all adequate for those who desire to come. It is true there are often some vacant seats; but this happens only after the students have crowded the room to the limit of standing capacity for weeks, and have learned that even then not half the enrollment can get within the doors. There are very few older people who would go to church every Sunday morning, only to find themselves left on the sidewalk!

For joint debates, joint sessions of the literary societies and other similar occasions,

as well as for concerts by University student organizations, and all miscellaneous meetings of students, such as the Athletic Association, there is practically no provision. For a room that will not carry more than one-third of the student body is not at all adapted to the maintenance of that pure democracy which is and ought to be the pride and greatest inspiration of such an institution; and no students or student organizations will do their best when but a portion of their fellow students can have opportunity to hear and approve their work.

For the Charter Day exercises, with the concluding oration by some distinguished outsider; for all the exercises of Commencement Week; for all lecture courses and other similar attempts to bring to the students a breath of the outer air of larger life; for the annual gatherings of the alumni, with their own chosen orator; in fact, for every occasion on which there must be room for all or no meeting; the University must go to the city and hire a suitable place. As to this, it is not always possible; since the engagements of any first-class theatre are made at least a year in advance; and when possible, breaks the University spirit and makes of such occasions too much of a public gathering rather than a student gathering, and removes the assembly from all the surroundings and conditions and traditions which give the peculiar flavor and enjoyment to University affairs as such. No mention is here made of the expense of all this, though it constitutes no small burden from year to year.

It is certainly an anomaly in education that an institution has no room in which all its students may be assembled for an occasional word of advice or instruction. When the only means by which the Chancellor can reach the students is by a notice on a bulletin board, in a dark and crowded hall, the wonder is that he can reach them and direct or advise them at all. The entire life and health and well-being of the University demands something more and far better than this.