

# THE Y. M. C. A. A POWERFUL FORCE

By EDGAR W. TURLINGTON

A man's college days mark a critical period in his religious life. Cut loose from home influences and precipitated into the freedom of the campus, the student finds glorious opportunities for real development, but at the same time he encounters grave dangers. There comes a tendency to drift, to grow careless with regard to the deepest things in life and to feel no interest in the things of religion except a detached, impersonal sort of academic interest in them as striking phenomena, to become inactive in religious work to stop growing religiously. At this critical period there is need of some powerful force to steady, to make active and to develop the college man in his religious life.

This powerful force the Young Men's Christian Association undertakes to be. It should be interesting to see to what extent it succeeds in its great undertaking.

How does the Y. M. C. A. steady a man? First of all, by means of the intangible but no less considerable influence which it exerts over him as a conscious unit in its organization.

In addition, it employs four agencies of a more tangible sort. These are, briefly, its Bible Study Courses, with half the students in the University in voluntary study of the Bible; its Mission Study Courses, with over 300 enrollment; its Religious Meetings, with their inspiring Tuesday night addresses from members of the faculty and the helpful Thursday night pray-services, well attended; and, finally, the Association House itself, large and well fitted, with reading-room, game-room, and lobby, the center of the social life of the campus, where all may meet in a real and uplifting fellowship. These agencies the Y. M. C. A. employs to steady the college man in the critical period of his life. The immense deepening of the whole moral tone of the University in recent years has been due quite largely to this steadying work of the Y. M. C. A.

The second mission of the Y. M. C. A. is to make the college man active in his religious life. Steadying him is by no means the whole of the battle. He must have work to do, if for no other reason, because it will keep him firm. The Y. M. C. A. puts men into definite Christian work. It makes them feel that it is their first duty to be of service. It uses them in the work of the Book Exchange, of the Publications, of the countless "little unremembered acts of kindness and of love" for their fellow students. It uses them in getting the freshmen comfortably settled in their new home, and in providing for those who must work their way through college facilities for helping themselves. It uses many men as leaders of Bible Classes. It sends several out into the country around Chapel Hill to conduct Sunday Schools and thus to extend the enlightening and uplifting influence of the University. Finally, its crowning service is the support of a Y. M. C. A. missionary in China. Much work the Y. M. C. A. does, and all of it through the students.

This work of the Y. M. C. A., following and cooperating with its steady influence, necessarily issues in its third great service, the development of the student in his religious life. The student who yields himself thus far to the influence of the Y. M. C. A. experiences a real growth in his religious life. He is developing, furthermore, into a potential religious leader in his community in after years. Again, he has opportunities for actual experience in leadership. The work must have leaders, men of ability to direct its work, to lead Bible Classes, to look after finances, to see to all its workings. To these leaders the Y. M. C. A. gives invaluable training in

constructive leadership. While developing all, these men it especially develops.

What, it may be asked, is this Young Men's Christian Association, this organization that plays such a large part in a man's life at this critical period, steadying, making active, and developing him? Is it an organization from the outside, begging him to support it and be helped by it? That

is just what it is not. It is preeminently a democratic organization, of, by, and for the students. It is the student body expressing itself religiously. It is, as has been said, an organized, aggressive force for Christian service and clean Christian manhood. It is the great aim of the Young Men's Christian Association to have itself felt as an indispensable part of the life of the University, as belonging to all the students, and opposed to the best interests of none.

### A Working Organization

I regard the Young Men's Christian Association as one of the most valuable factors in the organization of the University. Its influence is always for good. It stands for cleanliness of life, for fidelity to duty. This large body of strong christian young men, banded together for mutual helpfulness in right living and spiritual culture means more than I can well express in the life of the University.

It is truly a working association. The sum total of christian work done is most noteworthy. A large percentage of the student gathered each Sunday for the study of the Bible, mission classes held, Sunday schools supported, prayer meetings conducted, churches built, besides a number of other activities—all of these influence deeply the life both of the University and the community.

I rejoice in the prosperity of the Association and am glad to promote its welfare in any way in my power.

F. P. VENABLE,  
President of the University.

At the recent Christmas meeting of the American Society of Zoologists (Eastern Branch), held at Cornell University, Professor H. V. Wilson read a paper "On the Regenerative Power of the Dissociated Cells in Hydroids." Professor Wilson was made president of the society.



E. W. TURLINGTON, President

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