

Correspondence.

To the Editors of the MCGILL GAZETTE.

DEAR SIRS,

I should like to bring before the Faculties of Arts and Applied Science as well as the students of the same, the obtrusive fact that the present system of wearing gowns is by no means a desirable one. I am surprised that the students have not hitherto spoken on this subject through the GAZETTE. But many have the faculty—sometimes fortunately for them—of readily becoming accustomed to an inconvenient custom; evidently it has been so with this of wearing gowns. To the Freshman it is as disagreeable as it is new; but not being in a position to dispute the regulation, he accepts the inevitable, gets his gown, and carries about at any rate, a lighter purse. In the succeeding years he wears one because he has it, and if toward the end of his course he gives a thought to the absurdity of the custom, "There's no use bothering about it now." To the students, therefore, I would like to present the case as it presents itself to me, fully confident that if they consider a moment, they will agree with me; to the Faculties also, judging that as they have shown themselves by no means slow to move in a desirable direction, attention has only to be called to it to have the regulation erased from the books.

First then, it seems to me to be *useless*. We can imagine cases in which it might be of service. If it were worn on the streets, it *might*, as the sign of a student, be an aid to discipline, but it is not. If different gowns, as different uniforms among the different regiments of an army, were worn by different classes, there *might* be a desirable imitation fostered. I can see a reason why some preachers in the city wear them, for they make more graceful, perhaps, an ungainly figure, but students are not posing as speakers. A gown is neither brain itself nor brain stimulant; it hinders rather than helps one in taking lectures; Molson Hall loses none of its terrors when we are armed with a gown: in fact or seriously, turn where I will, I fail to find any imaginable use for it.

I know that just here it might be urged that there are some things which, though not of practical use, we are glad to retain, because of the inspiring associations which gather around them; and some grand talking might be indulged in, about the *esprit de corps* that gowns foster. But that is no argument. *Esprit de corps* can flourish outside the ægis of a gown. Medical students are gownless, and we never doubt their *esprit de corps*.

There is another and very practical objection—they are an expense. A gown costs from three to six dollars, not a great sum indeed, but very few come to McGill who have overflowing pockets. It is well for her that most of her sons earn the very money which supports them during their course. We cannot wonder, therefore, that such grumble at paying six dollars for what is worth nothing to them.

I have heard but a few days since, that some years ago the decision of "gown or no gown," was in the hands of the students and they voted to retain it. We do not bless them for doing so, and I feel assured if the Faculties were to give the same opportunity to the present students, they would heartily say, what I humbly maintain, that the

"GOWN MUST GO."

[We disagree entirely with the substance of this letter. We had imagined that this worn out question had been settled once and forever, as far as McGill is concerned. We do not think that the writer will succeed in getting up an agitation on the subject, and we are confident that the former decision of the students would be almost unanimously upheld were another vote taken.—Eds.]

Poetry.

TO A LADY.

Beloved friend, I weep because your heart I've grieved,
I called you "soft." What then, was I deceived?
Should I have said you're made of stone, you're stiff and cold?
Those names sound better, but a lie I should have told.

Kind soul, I pray you now my hardness forgive;
I'll reverence, love, and trust you while I live, but
Believe me, if you can, that this it was I meant,
At once to tell the truth and pay a compliment.

LUTTON.

THE LOSS OF THE "ASIA."

SEPT. 1882.

The autumn day was fair and bright,
No gloomy cloud obscured the light;
The deep, blue lake was calm and still,
No evil omen boded ill,
As in the port the "Asia" lay,
Prepared to cross the Georgian Bay.

The wind sprang up and whistled shrill,
The sail of many a bark to fill.
White-crested waves played to and fro,
Which only seemed the more to throw
A glimmering beauty on the sight.
So soon to fade in darkest night.

The fated vessel, deep with freight,
Steamed outward to the harbour gate;
Four score and more warm, beating hearts,
Upon her decks, with playful arts
Waved fond farewells, with mirthful glee,
To friends they never more might see.

'They little thought, as forth they sped—
The happy bride but newly wed:
The prattling babe all pure and bright:
The age I sire so wintry white:
That soon, O soon! the wild, wild waves
Would roll above their lonely graves.

O! could they know that, never more
They'd tread with friends the peaceful shore:
Nor loved ones clasp in warm embrace,
At home, that hallowed, sacred place:
Nor meet again, where praise is given
To Him who rules in Earth and Heaven.

How oft we think—had we but known,
Or could we see what, God alone
Holds in His hand; we'd happy be;
Our steps we'd guard: from care be free.
Futurity we cannot tell;
Our God knows best, it must be well.

The fated ship rides on in pride,
Far out upon the waters wide,
The storm king shrieks and stirs the deep;
The billows roll, and foam, and leap,
Grim Death strides forth; his scythe is seen;
A ripe, rich harvest he will glean.

The vessel plunges in the main;
She rights; she rolls; she rights again.
The helm, strong hands hold with a will.
A brave, great heart commands with skill,
A gleam of hope breaks on them soon—
The storm may cease before 'tis noon.

Vain hope! the gale returns with strength;
And fury spent, bursts forth at length.
The angry waves roll high and wide,
And plunge the ship beneath the tide.
They gather all their force and might;
And quench, like wind, a spark of light.

O cruel winds! O fierce wild waves!
Ye've filled with dear ones, many a grave.
In vain we weep, in vain we sigh;
Ye never deign to hear our cry:
One voice ye'll heed—a voice of dread:
'Tis God will speak: "Give up thy dead!"

"OTHO SCRIBBLERUS."