

a mystery, unreasonable, ridiculous. The ragamuffin is exercising a strange power. Let him but lift an arm, and, as in a pool, rings run hurrying away to the outer circumference and splash there. The whole circle is affected, though in different ways, as with the pebbles on the beach: on some just the faintest ripple, on others the waves run up and over. So it was a continuously varying scene. Amazed, I know not what to think—two hundred intelligent citizens finding food for thought in such a small uncomely morsel!—it passes comprehension. Then at last I thought of that immortal plowman bending thoughtful over a tiny field-mouse or a “wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow’r,” and then all grew lucid and (forgive the thought) I recognized a similar meditation here, meditation, however, in concert, socially, co-operatively, as I said before. Since then, I have thought much upon the matter, and for my explanation I find abundant confirmation.

For instance, many a time I have assisted at a charming scene in the Lunembourg gardens. Sitting on that bench over there is an old man. He has a piece of bread in his hands and with it he is feeding the sparrows. There are 20, 30, 40, 50 of these little fellows about him, chirruping, hopping about, catching crumbs halfway in the air, performing many little acrobatic feats. Round in a semi-circle about the old man is a group of Parisians. Old ladies with children, young dandies, business men, grave civic or military veterans. There is the same intentness, a silence too, broken only now and then by the whispered admiration of some lively child. Such a look of kindness prevails. Kind eyes. Stern, bargaining faces and cunning wrinkles give way to smiles. And such smiles! full of humanity. A very atmosphere for all of delicious kindness. What an education of the heart is going on.

No one wants to go away. Half-an-hour, three-quarters go by. I am sure those business men must be late this morning. If so, they don't seem to care about it. They loiter there, smiling and thinking. What can it be they are thinking of? That is what I query again and again as I watch these scenes, and never yet have I had an answer. Rare, unwritten poems, doubtless. Lyrics evanescent and intangible as the fragrance of sweet flowers. Oh, the mystery of thought! I have spoken to some of these men, and from their lips came polite but common words, never anything of a fine inspiration. And perhaps some one will say, “And so it is with them all, and with your imagined poems. Bring the fairy gold to the light of day, and it is only twigs and withered leaves.” No, no, for know you not that spirits dwell apart and communicate but rarely for the greatest good that is in them? Only within a certain variable mean do or can men live and speak together. They must mount and descend alone.

But let us be superior to the temptation to “extra-harangles” and return soberly to our subject (revenir à nos moutons, as the French say in their prose), balancing dexterously, with the single aid of our intelligence, along the narrow line we have marked out. The French are a meditative people, socially so, conjointly, co-operatively, gregariously, as it were. This has perhaps been sufficiently proved in the scenes I have described, scenes which are occurring in infinite variety every day in Paris, and in which we cannot imagine Englishmen or Germans taking part, still less restless Americans.

But let me add one more instance which illustrates this novel meditation in its most perfect development. It would be hard to say how often I have approached a fair-sized group, in circular form, heads all bent forward to the centre and an impressive silence maintained. I have penetrated in to the midst of these groups by commendable efforts in the interests of international psychology, simply to discover the wherefore of the assemblage. Again and again the reply to my questioning was “nothing” and was verified by ocular examination. The faces all wore that thoughtful intentness, a patience and satisfaction with, in these cases where nothing was the subject of meditation, a super-added abstractedness. Whatever had at first been the subject of meditation had evaporated utterly, consumed away under so many active minds. These groups remind one of that algebraic  $x$  which, at first confronted in equation with a formidable army of figures, finds itself, after a sharp fire of cancelling, suddenly, and surely not without surprise, face to face with zero. Were these latter cases of collective meditation the only ones to be met with, instead of being, as they actually are, almost lost in multitudes of similar groups in less advanced stages of abstraction, they would still triumphantly prove the claim of the French to take rank as a meditative people.

The student of the survival of ancient customs in modern culture may fancy he sees in the trait of French character a faint reminiscence of the wild circular dances of early times. The old violence of movement is no longer necessary; the electric current, which Science asserts to be present, flows by the stimulus of simple approximation; and the inspired trance gives place to mild meditation—differences easily explainable by the refinement of civilisation. It may be legitimately doubted whether the above considerations will be appreciated by psychological science. They nevertheless serve admirably their immediate purpose. They will be welcome to the charitably minded as the rectification in an important feature of a national caricature. R. BALMER.

## THE 'Varsity.

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### Editorial Notes.

*THE 'Varsity Book of Prose and Poetry is now ready, and those who have already ordered it will receive their copies at once. The book may be obtained at the Janitor's Room, University College, on Commencement Day, or from Mr. W. H. Irving, the business manager of the 'Varsity. It is also on sale at the following bookstores: Vannear & Co., Hart & Co., and Williamson & Co.*

WITH this issue the present staff retire from the management of the 'Varsity. With unfeigned regret we do so, for our connection with the university journal has been fruitful of many pleasant associations. We express our gratitude to our many friends who have made a pleasure of our labors by words of kindly appreciation and sympathy. Our thanks are especially due to our able and self-denying contributors, to whose efforts we owe in a large measure whatever degree of success the 'Varsity may have attained. The almost uniform courtesy of our brethren of the college press we also gratefully acknowledge. Though our more immediate connection with the 'Varsity is now severed, yet the future course of our college paper will always interest us, and we hope through its means to continue in some measure the numerous acquaintanceships so happily formed.

WHEN women were first admitted to University College last October we stated that the 'Varsity would not pronounce a judgment upon the new departure until a sufficient time had elapsed to warrant a fair expression of opinion. The year's experience goes to show that the evils which cautious persons alleged would follow are quite mythical. Both professors and students have expressed their entire satisfaction with the experiment, and there is no reason to suppose that they will ever have grounds to change their opinion. It is gratifying to find that this measure of justice, which has been at last accorded to the young women of Ontario, has been attended with such marked success.

FROM a return brought down last session to the Ontario Legislature, it appears that the average yearly amount for the past eleven years spent on prizes and scholarships in Upper Canada College was \$475—a somewhat large sum to come out of public funds for such a purpose. From the same return we learn that the average amount spent yearly on scholarships in Toronto University during the same period was \$4,346. To this should be added an average of \$342 for medals and prizes in Toronto University and an average of \$324 for prizes in University College—a total expenditure of \$5,012. All of this, except the Blake Scholarship of \$100 since 1878, and the Mary Mulock scholarship of \$120 since 1883, has come out of the ordinary revenue of the University and College. How serious a matter this expenditure is can be seen on consideration of what it would accomplish in other directions. It would pay the salaries of two additional professors, or of four lecturers, or of ten fellows. It would enable the Senate to remunerate decently the University examiners and employ better men in that capacity. It would enable the Board of Trustees to make extensive and much-needed additions to the library, the laboratories, and the museum. Expended in any one or more of these ways all the students would enjoy the benefit of the expenditure; at present the benefit is confined to a very few, and those not always in need of pecuniary assistance.