

body of students. The volumes of the various learned periodicals taken by the library will also be found in the seminaries. As it is necessary that the utmost quiet shall prevail in the reading-room, conversation rooms have been provided in the basement for the convenience of those who may wish to converse with their friends. An innovation of some interest to the student is the fee of \$2 imposed for the use of the library. The proceeds of this fee will be devoted exclusively to library purposes.

We have endeavored in the above brief sketch to convey some idea of what has been done to provide a building for the library entirely worthy of our great and growing University. We have already intimated that we feel pleased to be able to announce that it is so near completion. In fact we never pass the portal but we half wish we were a freshman again, or better still one of the many who are studying hard to become freshmen, so that we might be able fully to enjoy the numerous good things that will in the near future fall to the lot of the Varsity student. We already have the library, there will be before long a properly equipped gymnasium, and perhaps at no very distant date a convocation hall. Perhaps, also, the Residence problem will be worked out and something satisfactory in that direction be at last evolved. Truly we stand at the threshold of a new era. The crisis of what we might, to use a geological term, call the igneous period of our history, has been passed successfully, and we look with confidence unto the future.

It is with a peculiar thrill we note the tendency to discontinue the old Hallowe'en observance. The round of opera, police, ladies' colleges, etc., has doubtless done good service in the past. Many of us remember the happy hours we spent in developing our lungs and chasing the patrol waggon, particularly on the night when the thirty thousand were on parade. But its usefulness and pleasure have alike departed, and so it is being discarded. According to the most authentic evidence we have been able to collect the crowd on last Hallowe'en consisted almost entirely of representatives from St. John's Ward and Osgoode. It remains for us to devise something to replace the defunct entertainment of the benighted past.

AS WE LIST: AND YE LIST.

A bond at birth is forged; a debt doth lie
Immortal on mortality. It grows,
By vast rebound it grows, unceasing growth;
Gift upon gift, alms upon alms, upreared,
From man, from God, from nature, till the soul
At that so huge indulgence stands amazed.

—Underwoods.

A little book seldom read or talked of fell in our path the other day, and we glanced over it with some curiosity. It was a small volume of verse entitled "Underwoods," written by that consummate craftsman, Robert Louis Stevenson.

Andrew Lang said not long ago that one ran no risk now in praising Mr. Stevenson, for somehow or other he had no enemies and everybody liked him. And who knows of anyone that does not like him? When we first make his acquaintance we become infatuated with him and wish to follow him throughout, from the terrible transformations of "Dr. Jekyll" and the horror of "Treasure Island," through the mysteries of the "New Arabian Nights," across the Cevennes with wayward "Modestine," around

the curves of the Oise with the "Cigarette" in the "Inland Voyage," and so faithfully on through all his books to the "Wrecker." In confidence we will confess that one of his novels, "The Master of Ballantrae," we found rather tiresome. That, however, may have been because we received it in monthly rations. Waiting too long for the threads of a story is like waiting too long for the courses of a dinner—our appetite meantime escapes us.

After reading "Underwoods" we feel that metrical form does not enrich Mr. Stevenson's thought. It contains many charming and picturesque stanzas, some that are powerful, others that are pathetic. As instances one might mention in the *English* half: "The Canal Speaks," "The Unfathomable Sea," "Our Lady of the Snows," "Not Yet, My Soul," "In Memoriam," "To My Father;" and in the *Scots* half: "A Mile an' a Bittock," "The Blast—1875," "The Counterblast—1886," "The Counterblast Ironical," "The Scotsman's Return from Abroad," "Late in the Night," and "My Conscience." But it is in prose, not verse, that he can best express himself. There is perhaps no novelist living that writes such clear, nervous English as he, nor any that has tried so hard to do it. We call him a craftsman because he made a craft of his writing and labored at it. Early in his boyhood (we have the account from his own pen) he conceived a desire to write well, and it never forsook him. Wherever he wandered he carried with him a book to read and a book to write. All times, all places, all persons were the subjects whereon he practised. Nothing was too near or too far, too high or too low for his purpose. He would sit down on a boulder by the roadside and endeavor to describe the scene before him; he would pause in the street to note the look of a passing face or a city throng. And as a result years after we find the boy's determined pencil producing in the hands of the man descriptions such as this:—

"The river was swollen with the long rains. From Vadencourt all the way to Origny it ran with ever quickening speed, taking fresh heart at each mile, and racing as though it already smelt the sea! The water was yellow and turbulent, and swung with an angry eddy among half-submerged willows, and made an angry clatter along stony shores. The course kept turning and turning in a narrow and well-timbered valley. Now, the river would approach the side and run griding along the chalky base of the hill, and show us a few open colza fields among the trees. Now it would skirt the garden walls of houses, where we might catch a glimpse through a door-way and see a priest pacing in the chequered sunlight. Again, the foliage closed so thickly in front that there seemed to be no issue, only a thicket of willows, overtopped by elms and poplars, under which the river ran flush and fleet, and where a kingfisher flew past like a piece of the blue sky. On these different manifestations the sun poured its clear and catholic looks. The shadows lay as solid on the swift surface of the stream as on the stable meadows. The light sparkled golden in the dancing poplar leaves and brought the hills into communion with our eyes. And all the while the river never stopped running or took breath; and the reeds along the whole valley stood shivering from top to toe."

Imitations he attempted with unchecked audacity—imitations of Lamb or Montaigne in the essay, of Wordsworth, Browning, Swinburne in verse, of Dumas and Thackeray in romance. He says: "Even at the age of thirteen I had tried to do justice to the inhabitants of the famous city of Peebles in the style of the "Book of Snobs." He would select and set and polish words, then with unwearied hope discover that his jewels were trash, and with unwearied courage seeking new materials, he would select and set and polish them again.

"That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write," he declares.

No doubt, and everyone should be recommended to try it, but everyone should not be assured of success. For notwithstanding all that Mr. Stevenson tells us about the development of his art, the germ, the tendency must have been there to develop. The very zeal and persistency