

## Trinity University Review.

Published by the Students of TRINITY COLLEGE. Contribution and literary matter of all kinds solicited from the Alumni and friends of the University.

All matter intended for publication to be addressed to the Editors Trinity College.

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Terms, post paid—Annual subscription, \$1.00.

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TRINITY COLLEGE, TORONTO.

LENT TERM, 1888.

We noticed the other day a thought from Ruskin, who is always suggestive, even if he is not perfectly correct in his opinion,—which we are disposed to question. In his work, Pre-Raphaelitism, he writes: "No great intellectual thing was ever done by great effort; a great thing can only be done by a great man, and he does it without effort." We are afraid Mr. Ruskin leaves Englishmen out of consideration, and judges by those clever-at-everything Italians, of some three or four centuries ago. Shakespeare indeed, we are told, did his work easily and rapidly, but we do not recall another example. The question is a very large one, and we may refer to it again. Mr. Ruskin's statement is by no means, we think, to be taken seriously,—perhaps he did not mean it to be so.

As Mr. George Augustus Sala once plaintively remarked, life is too short to permit of our reading everything; and so it seems there is a great deal we shall be compelled to leave unread. It stands to reason, then, that a wise selection of our reading, that we may get, if possible, what is best, and sacrifice only what may be dispensed with, is the most profitable plan. It is often very hard to confine oneself strictly to a list, even of the "best" books. Desultory reading seems to be very natural, and it certainly is very easy and pleasant. We are reminded of the learned Abbe who was in the prison with the Count of Monte Christo, whose great store of knowledge was obtained from so small a list of books well read.

Sir John Lubbock, we think, brought the practice into fashion of writing a list of "the hundred best books." His list did not by any means give universal satisfaction, and came in for a good deal of sharp criticism. Notwithstanding, the subject seems to have had a great fascination for literary minds, and almost every writer of prominence has done something at it. Perhaps everybody likes to talk about his favorite books—even those enthusiastic mortals who cannot go to any more definite particulars than that they think Shakespeare "is just lovely," that they "just dote on Browning, and that Byron is awfully nice." So there have been lists and lists. But when those curious individuals who could not write lists themselves began to bother more clever men, the whole matter became insuffer-

able. Clever literary men have been pestered again and again, and at length one of them has brought out a list of the best books which cites some 25,000 of them, though Mr. James Payn says he does not see why there should not be 50,000.

Then followed the fashion of citing the best passages in prose and verse. Many celebrated men engaged in this agreeable pastime, and there was a great deal of profitable and interesting interchange of preferences and sentiments, though Mr. Bill Nye informs us he could not state his choice, for he had really forgotten what his favorite passages were.

There is a passage in Macaulay which we used to admire very much, the concluding pages of his essay on Mitford's History of Greece. He writes of the mission of literature in the world, and in splendid style describes the comforting and ennobling influence of the literature of Athens, cheering the lonely scholar in his retirement, and bearing solace to philosophers and patriots wearied with the strife and ignorance of men—long after the material glory of the noble city has passed away. We have never seen the passage quoted as a gem, but we think it well worthy of careful perusal.

## THE CONVERSAZIONE.

On the night of Tuesday, February 7th, the walls of old Trinity for a time cast off their usual sombre aspect, and presented a very lively appearance. The occasion was the Annual Conversazione, which is chief among college festivals. This year the event was acknowledged to have been more successful than ever before, and Trinity must have welcomed within its walls the largest concourse of people in the whole course of its existence. A fair estimate would be that nine hundred of Toronto society must have participated in the gay scene. About eight o'clock the guests began to pour in, and for an hour or more a stream of people found their way to the dressing rooms, which were crowded to their utmost capacity. On the entrance hall the decoration committee had spent its noblest efforts. Flags were draped tastefully over the arches and walls, while wreaths of bunting in varied colors were festooned along the ceilings. Curtains and flags lighted up with the soft rays of Chinese lanterns, gave a subdued but festive appearance to the corridors, and in them many a nook was arranged where, it is needless to say, there was not room enough for three.

A concert in Convocation Hall was the main attraction in the first part of the evening, when the following programme was well carried out:

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| PART I.                            |                                       |
| 1. GLEE.....                       | Joyous life .....                     |
|                                    | GLEE CLUB.                            |
| 2. PIANO SOLO.....                 | (a) Gavotte.....M. Edna Bigelow.      |
|                                    | (b) Molto Felice.....F. J. Hatton.    |
|                                    | MISS E. S. MELLISH, MUS. BAC.         |
| 3. SONG.....                       | "Good bye".....Tosti.                 |
|                                    | MR. J. F. THOMSON.                    |
| 4. SONG.... "Mia Picciarella"..... | (Salvator Rosa) ..By A. Carlos Gomez. |
|                                    | MISS BUNTON.                          |