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The Sanctum.

THE anxious inquiry of the Seniors of each year, as the reading of "Theses" is finished is, "what is the purpose of this *show any how*." The answer is still wanting. The benefits claimed for the students who prepare these papers, depend largely upon the subjects assigned. If as would appear from some of the assignments, it is to be merely a test of the students ability to produce something out of nothing, we beg to question the advantages. If, however, as is generally announced, the aim is to encourage a course of reading and investigation along certain lines, then why not consult the student's tastes somewhat in making the assignments. Within the limits necessarily set for such a paper, it is not possible to give a satisfactory treatment of any subject, and unless the exercise be interesting to the student himself, there is little probability that he will ever return to it again. On the student's part then the exercise is in too many cases a useless one.

But then if this requirement is altogether for the

writer's benefit, what is the object in having them delivered as at present. If this be for the satisfaction of the Faculty alone, who desire at this stage in the course to have some such test in regard to general scholarship, then why not confine the reading to a meeting of the faculty where there can be free, open criticism upon the subject-matter and composition.

It is a very reasonable conclusion that a paper which is supposed to contain the results of some months of careful reading, ought to be of interest and advantage to every student, but if this be the object in having them read, why is not the exercise regarded with more importance and some better arrangement made for it. In the first place, why not dispense with the regular classes, and have a full gathering of the students in one of the halls for an hour in each week. Certainly if it is expected that the student shall exhibit any pride and carefulness in the preparation and delivery of his paper, it is only natural that he should expect an audience to listen to him. Under the present arrangement, no doubt, since the time is either taken from study hours or recreation, many of the students are unable to attend. This objection should be removed and then the presence of every student required. The interest might be greatly increased by having the other departments represented.

But while too much cannot be said in regard to attendance, the matter of orderly attention is of supreme importance. No one feels greatly inspired to be greeted by a mere handful of his fellow-students, but any one would prefer a small number of attentive listeners to a room full of inattentive ones. To say the least it is uncomplimentary and rather discouraging for the one who is reading to find his voice almost drowned amid the *general hum*.

A repetition of the occurrences of a few weeks ago, would probably result in positive refusal on the part of the Seniors to present their papers. The custom ought either to be abolished or the situation made a little more comfortable for those who are expected to prepare papers. If it is to be continued, the Professors should begin the reform in both of these directions.