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COLLEGE JOURNALISM.

Among the various evidences of the literary activity of the present age is the College newspaper. In one sense it is not by any means a new idea. The great English public school, Eton, has had one or two examples. One of the first of these called, I believe, the *Microcosm*, was edited by Praed, whose untimely death robbed English literature of a second Barham, and whose early efforts published in the school paper gave bright promise of his future. Gladstone, too, was editor of the *Etonian*, a successor of the *Microcosm*, and published in it some very fervid poetry in praise of certain revolutionary heroes. But these papers were merely literary, and were tolerated by the authorities, who looked on them as the eccentricities of youthful genius, a toleration which would have been very quickly withdrawn had they once started to criticise the actions or rules of the governing powers. And this tacit acknowledgment of unwillingness to offend the powers that be, is evidenced even in the University papers now published in England, at least if we may judge of the whole from one specimen. This was excellent in point of careful editing and get up, but when one came to analyze its contents, they seem to consist mainly of copies of the various College screens and criticisms of College sports. As to University politics absolutely nothing. And it is in this point, that the American and Canadian College papers are essentially distinct. Perhaps it is the greater feeling of independence, but certainly College journalism here has to its advantage, taken an independent stand as a critic, and a reformer if possible. And it is to this stand that it owes its present authority. There can be no question as to its great utility, not merely for the introduction of young talent, but as a bond of union between the Colleges spread over this vast continent. Look at the Exchange Editor's table, you will find it piled with papers from Maine to California, from the Gulf of Mexico to Quebec. And we find them all doing good work. One for instance frames a crushing indictment of the secret societies which seem both the distinctive feature and the bane of modern American Universities. Another tells us what is doing in the athletic world. Another raises its voice against some time-honored abuse. And this brings us to the consideration of what constitutes the legitimate sphere of a College newspaper. Briefly, it is to be an organ of what may be termed University politics, to be a distributor of College news and to provide a field for any literary ability its particular College may possess. The question is, how do the majority of College papers answer to these requirements? On the whole, well. But there are one or two dangers which it may not be amiss to point out with regard to College politics. The

paper is very often a valuable medium for pointing out to the authorities grievances which only require to be known to be redressed, but must guard against making every little trifle a matter of moment. It weakens its influence. The cry of wolf is raised so often that when the occasion comes for it to be raised in earnest, no attention is paid and the paper loses its chief *raison d'être*. Again as to its position as a distributor of college news. It should be remembered that it has a circulation outside its own walls; hence anything entirely unintelligible to the outsiders should be omitted. For instance many American papers, excellent in every other respect, fill their column of College news with ejaculations and monosyllables which areaviare to the multitude. Of course it is not to be expected that an outsider is to understand every local allusion, but I maintain that these notes should be written in such a manner as that the ordinary reader can understand a little what is meant; besides this practice leads to trivialities, in most cases destitute of the wit which can alone make them palatable. Lastly as to literary matter. I feel I am venturing here on delicate ground, but a recent perusal of some college papers leads me to remark that in many cases this portion of a College paper's sphere is very often misunderstood. I ask the question:—is it well to attempt to deal with questions that require both a trained mind and a skilled pen? One paper I have now before me has an article entitled: "Truth germinal and not final," a subject requiring the most careful thought and writing, and it is dismissed in two columns. Besides it is out of place; no one would think for one moment of putting in an effusion on the differential calculus and yet it would be just as reasonable.

And now having pointed out some of the dangers to which this peculiar kind of journalism is liable, let me say a few words on its advantages. These are manifold. The practical training a man gets in assisting to manage a paper is of the greatest advantage; if he feels he has some idea of writing, his College paper offer him an opportunity he would otherwise be without, and by comparison with other papers he can very soon see where he either excels or is wanting. Most valuable it is too, as a medium of communication between the governing body and the students. Many a grievance which would have remained a constant source of irritation from its being unnoticed, has been brought to light and removed through the College paper. Looking at it in every way there is no doubt that the future of College journalism on this continent is very bright if care be taken. Its influence is increasing every day; this is proved by the superior way in which they are got up, showing that they appeal to a wider audience, and if discretion is used to prevent its strength being frittered away on unworthy objects it will prove as powerful in its own sphere as ordinary journalism is in the outside world.