

A SUGGESTION.

Literary curiosity-hunters have placed on record many examples of rapid composition—such as Johnson's "Rasselas," Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," Bacon's collection of jests, which Macaulay calls "the best in the world," etc., etc. I venture to think I shall be able to add one instance of my own, should the present article ever arrive at completion! At nine o'clock on Saturday morning I am asked if I can contribute a paper for the VARSITY, to be ready by Monday. Interpreting "by Monday" to mean, say, noon of that day, this gives me twenty-seven legal hours of work—provided I do not sleep and have nothing else to do. But, positing that I have a great deal else to do; that I certainly should not dream of curtailing my Saturday night's slumbers or my Monday's matutinal meditations; and that I should feel equally disinclined to—ahem—forego the conventional hebdomadal period of rest from secular labours; I have, say, some two or three hours in which to accede to the request. And this means, if I wish to follow Ben Jonson's sage advice, to "consider what ought to be written; and after what manner; to first think and excogitate my matter; then choose my words, and examine the weight of either; then take care in placing and ranking both matter and words, that the composition be comely."

Neither am I, I must confess, at the present moment, particularly prepared either in mind, body, or estate, for the inditing of a VARSITY article. Both my subjective and objective conditions militate against comely composition—especially my objective surroundings. Within ear-shot are two hugely proportioned women (I caught sight of them a moment since)—huge, that is, in their transverse diameters: they are distinguished rather for breadth than for length of limb. One of them is inflicting corporal punishment on what is ordinarily called a *pianoforte*, but which in this case ought to be called only a *forte*, or rather a *fortissimo*. The other is accompanying the resulting noise with vocal sounds as much in unison with the vibrations of the *forte* as it is possible for airs pitched in two different keys to be. The result says more for the arms and throats of the performers than for their ears. The volume of sound varies directly as the bulk of the producers. They are, indeed, ponderous. I fear to approach them. Remembering that gravitation acts directly as the mass, I imagine that centripetal forces (purely physical, by no means emotional) may draw me towards them, that Pharoah's dream of the fat and lean kine may be repeated *backwards*, as it were (and the parallel would not be so very dissimilar, for I should hardly add in any appreciable manner to their volume), and that I may disappear totally from off the face of the earth, and—awful catastrophe—contrary to my own inclinations, join my fortunes with theirs.

But, to return to old Jonson and his comely composition. I think that everything written for the VARSITY should be "comely." I cannot help thinking that to some the VARSITY has been merely a vehicle for the insertion of "copy" which could not be elsewhere inserted—a sort of cloaca for prose and verse. A great mistake this. One's *alma mater* is a jealous goddess. No periodical should be so severely critical as a university periodical. Indeed, by so high a standard would I measure the VARSITY, that I should be willing that to it the nation should look to discover the temper and character of the youth of the Province.

But "comely," truly, VARSITY articles have almost always been. The danger rather lies in the fact that their writers have aimed more at comeliness than at ought else. *Fine* writing seems to be their object. (How I loathe that word "fine.") It should be restricted to the description of the edge of a razor or a cloudless day. It has a history, however—as curious a history as the word "quaint." It was a very favourite word with our great-great-grandfathers—as favourite a word as "genteel." Let us hope it will go the way of "genteel.") But to return: Am I not right in thinking that *form* rather than *matter* has been too often the serious business of VARSITY writers? Both combined, of course, is the desideratum; but if both are not obtainable, I really think *matter* would be preferable to *form*.

To practise what I preach, to present to my readers matter

* Note.—The true meaning of the word is, I think, well shown in the following quotation from the "Ethics of the Dust":—"Yes; and always to dress yourselves beautifully—not finely, unless on occasions; but then very finely and beautifully too."

rather than form, I have a suggestion to make. I need tell no one that there is in England a society called "The Society for Psychical Research." Among the subjects discussed and investigated by this society (taken from the Tables of Contents of its last seven publications) are: "Thought-Transference," "Mesmerism," "Phenomena Associated with Abnormal Conditions of Mind," "Muscle-Reading," "Dreaming and Allied States," "A Magnetic Sense," "Hypnotism," "Telepathic Explanation of some so-called Spiritualistic Phenomena," "Hallucinations," "The Calculus of Probabilities applied to Psychical Research," "Theosophy," "Local Anæsthesia." My suggestion is: Could not a branch of this Society be formed in University College? Already many graduates and undergraduates are interesting themselves in the class of subjects considered by the Society—witness the correspondence which appeared in last year's VARSITY between Professor Young and two graduates on the subject of thought-transference. The Society, I know, has been much vilified, and their labours much derided; but such names as Balfour Stewart (President last year), the Bishop of Carlisle, Richard Holt Hutton, Hon. Roden Noel, Lord Rayleigh, the Bishop of Ripon, Prof. Sidgwick (vice-presidents last year), ought to give it some scientific status. My own opinion is that this Society will one day help to clear our views on the vexed question of the relations between Physiology and Psychology. One of the advantages of such a branch society would be that men of very different mental habits could join and aid each other. As the subjects I have mentioned above will show, metaphysics, mathematics, and the natural sciences, all could be brought to bear upon—let me use the word *Psychics*, I do not know that it has yet been coined, but it is one which may soon be needed. However, I intended merely to throw out this suggestion. Doubtless there are many in University College who know much more of the matter than do I; with them I leave my proposition.

ARNOLD HAULTAIN.

TO CHLOE.

Rondel.

What fearest thou, Chloe, my dainty quest,
That thou unkind shouldst spurn my whispered vow?
The chase but lends thy charms an added zest.

What fearest thou?

Thy ripening bloom is pasture meet, I trow,
Where Love may stray and graze at will or rest,
And ever find delight. Why flee—enow

Of years thou hast to be by lover pressed.
Full ripe for kisses, smooth thy troubled brow,
And tremble not at Love's imperious hest.

What fearest thou?

W. H. H.

LETTER FROM GERMANY.

FAUST ON THE STAGE.

Amongst the innumerable places of interest that I tried to see during a short stay in London was Mr. Henry Irving's theatre, the Royal Lyceum, to which I was especially attracted by Goethe's *Faust* being on the boards. After standing about two hours at the pit entrance (N.B. All the private boxes were taken), I succeeded in getting a front seat. The interval before the rising of the curtain was pleasantly passed in seeing the richly decorated theatre being gradually filled with every variety of spectator, from the wealthy gentleman in evening dress who occupied the stall, down to the common Englishman who owned a beaver hat and sat in the pit.

Punctually at the time announced, the first scene opened with Faust in his study. It will be noticed from this that the two prologues have been omitted, as playing no essential part in the dramatic action; and, indeed, in this adaptation of *Faust* for the English stage, this plan is followed throughout,—omit all those parts that are not immediately connected with the progress of the drama, and curtail those scenes that are, from this point of view, unnecessarily long. Wagner, the *tamulus*, is dispensed with, the dialogue is in many instances