

THE SANCTUM.

Showing the wholesome reverence the Freshman has for that place, opened to the few and closed to the many.

"Thou, bower of the muses bright,
How would I long to catch one sight
Of all thou canst to me reveal.
Prithie what is't thou dost conceal?"
Thus did I sigh and sigh in vain,
Until I chanced a friend to gain,
With whom one day I went to see,
What there so wonderful might be.
I found on passing through the door,
It was a room and nothing more.
The walls were dight with pictures bright,
In front, behind, on left and right;
The picture of Gladstone so wise
Right up before my eyes did rise.
Chairs there were also, and a table too,
A mantel-piece so strange to view
So carved with Greek and Latin signs,
Only "*tempus fugit*" me reminds
That I must wend my way homeward,
And ne'er attempt a theme so hard.

Q. E. D.

COMMUNICATIONS.

The Editors are not responsible for the opinions of correspondents.
No notice will be taken of unsigned contributions.

A POST-GRADUATE COURSE.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—We are all well aware how necessary a post-graduate course is in connection with Toronto University. Many graduates feel that they have made only a beginning, and desire to pursue still farther their course of study, but Canada offers them no facilities for post-graduate work, and consequently they are compelled to go to German or American Universities. What is to be lamented, is not that they pursue their post-graduate course in foreign Universities, but rather that only a small percentage of those who would take up the work here if we had proper facilities, ever take it up anywhere. There are now eight graduates of Toronto University at Johns Hopkins University, hence we may safely predict that if a post-graduate course is established here, there will be a class of fifty or more. No one can deny that such a course would be of the greatest benefit to our higher education, and so the question is one of means only.

Why should not the Collegiate Institutes and High Schools do the work of the first year? Then the faculty could give to the post-graduate students the time now spent on the fresh-man class. We have many efficient Collegiate Institutes and High Schools which can easily do the work of the first year. Now that the work prescribed for the departmental examinations is identical, as far as it goes, with that for junior matriculation, it will be no harder for the schools to prepare pupils for the senior matriculation, than it was, some years ago, to prepare them for the junior.

Since the schools can easily do the work of the first year, and since the time now given to a fresh-man class of one hundred and fifty would be sufficient for the post-graduate class, I think the above plan feasible.

G. D. WILSON.

THE CONVERSAZIONE.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—In the past the Invitation Committee of the Conversazione General Committee have extended the courtesy of the President and members of the Literary and Scientific Society to their annual conversazione to a number of gentlemen who have very little connection with the institution. It seems to me that the officers of the University, benefactors of our College, and prominent public men, should alone be recognized in this way. I feel assured that in this matter I voice the sentiments of the majority of University men.

GRADUATE.

A RUSSIAN FABULIST.

Whether due entirely to enterprising literary caterers, or in some measure to that broad human sympathy that is ever responsive to the utterance of what is best in man, whatever the tongue which speaks it, of late there has certainly been deep interest taken in the literature of countries hitherto supposed to be outside the pale of culture. Turgeneff and Bjornson are almost as familiar names to us as Manzoni and Balsac. There are other writers, however, who are comparatively unknown, yet whose work has value for us both intrinsically and as indicative of national aspirations and feelings.

Among such unknown though deserving authors may be placed the Russian fabulist—Krilof, who was born into the troubled times that closed the last century. Fortunately we need not be skilled in the barbarous language of the Russian to gain his acquaintance; his work is readily accessible in a translation, which, though in prose, admirably reproduces the spirit and peculiar flavour of the original.*

Krilof, as indeed every fabulist must be, is on most excellent terms with all lower forms of life. To point his moral against social follies and extravagances he introduces animals with all human modes of thought and human passions. The true fabulist has such a child-like sincerity that there seems to be nothing forced or unnatural in his make-believe. We follow with grave pleasure the conversation of Lion and Fox, or the musical discussions of the animal quartette composed of "The tricky Monkey, the Goat, the Ass and bandy-legged Mishka the Bear."

To the English reader the incidental pictures of peasant life and little sketches satirizing social nuisances or public grievances are of more interest than pieces that have a political purpose, for the former are as true of the America of to-day, as of the Russia which Krilof knew.

Here is one called "The Musicians" with an obvious moral.

A certain man invited a neighbour to dinner, not without an ulterior purpose. He was fond of music, and he entrapped his neighbour into his house to listen to his choir. The honest fellows began to sing, each on his own account, and each with all his might. The guest's ears began to split, and his head to turn.

"Have pity on me!" he exclaimed, in amazement, "What can any one like in all this? Why, your choristers bawl like madmen."

"It's quite true," replied the host, with feeling, "they do flay one's ears just a trifle. But, on the other hand, they are of irreproachable behaviour, and they never touch a drop of intoxicating liquor."

On the occasion of a literary reunion, a poet who got a hearing abused the forbearance of his audience by reading a very long poem. It seemed interminable. Judge of the relief when Krilof followed with his 'Demian's Fish Soup.'

"Neighbour light of my eyes, do eat a little more."

"Dear neighbour, I am full to the throat."

"No matter, just a little plateful. Believe me the soup is cooked gloriously."

"But I've had three platefuls already."

"Well, what does that matter? If you like it and it does you good, why not eat it all up? What a soup it is! How rich! It looks as if it had been sprinkled over with amber. Here is bream; there is a lump of sterlet. Take a little more, dear, kind friend. Just another spoonful! Wife, come and entreat him."

Thus does Demian feast his neighbour Phocas, not giving him a moment's breathing time. Phocas feels the moisture trickling down his forehead; still he takes one more plateful, attacks it with all the strength he has left, and somehow manages to swallow the whole of it.

"That's the sort of a friend I like!" cries Demian. "I can't bear people who require pressing. But now, dear friend, take just one little plateful more!"

But on hearing this, our poor Phocas, much as he liked fish soup, catching hold of his cap and sash, runs away home without looking behind him. Nor from that day to this has he crossed Demian's threshold.

As a specimen of the naturalness of Krilof when dealing purely with the animal kingdom, "The Wolf and the Fox" may be quoted.

A Fox which had feasted on fowls to satiety, and had set aside a good store of spare food, lay down under a haycock one evening to sleep. Suddenly it looks up, and sees a hungry Wolf dragging itself along to pay him a visit.

"This is terrible gossip!" says the Wolf. "I cannot anywhere even find the smallest of bones to pick. I am actually dying of hunger. The dogs are malicious, the shepherd won't sleep, and I have nothing left but to hang myself."

"Really?"

"Really and truly."

"My poor old gossip! But won't you take a little hay? There is a whole haycock. I am delighted to oblige my friend."

B.

*Krilof and his Fables, by W. R. S. Ralston, M. A., of the British Museum, London, 1869.