

the financial basis of the paper, it is obvious that the reduction must have an effect on the Treasury for the present year, as the benefits looked for must be of gradual development. This being the case, then, it is to be hoped that the friends and supporters of THE VARSITY will make an effort to assist us in this present sacrifice for a future good by prompt communication with the Treasurer.

COMMUNICATIONS.

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

MATRICULATION STANDARDS.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—Permit me to make a few remarks in reference to Matriculation Standards. Your editorial last week was, to say the least, misleading.

So far as I understand the discussion, complaint is made, and very generally made, that the standard for Pass Matriculation is absurdly low. Very little, if any, fault is found with the standard for honours. Now, the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes are authorized and prepared to fit candidates for examination in any of the *Honour* Courses at the Matriculation Examination. Much more, then, are they prepared to fit candidates for the *Pass* Examination.

The only effect that raising the standard for Pass would have upon the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes would be to keep students in attendance for a longer period. The schools are already doing honour work in all the departments and no new burden would be laid upon them by simply demanding a higher percentage for Pass.

Upon whom then does the blame rest? Assuredly not, as you affirm, upon the Education Department. Why, I have heard a headmaster of long experience say that it is easier to prepare candidates for Pass Matriculation, even at Toronto University, than for Third Class Certificates from the Education Department. In fact, the Department has made provision for the necessary instruction and the blame for the low standard rests wholly upon those who have control of the Matriculation Examination.

Compare the percentage of candidates plucked at the Matriculations with the percentage of those plucked at the Departmental Examinations.

Yours, etc.,
ALEX. H. GIBBARD.

Brantford, March 12th, 1889.

MODERN AUTHORS IN THE ENGLISH COURSE.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—The thanks of the Modern Language students are due to you for the position you have assumed with reference to the study of contemporary authors in the English Course. To the efforts of THE VARSITY in past years towards securing a radical revision of the Modern Language Department we doubtless owe our present happier circumstances. Evils still exist, however, and the Senate should hear of them from the student's standpoint. A very gross error, evidently, is the disproportionate value attached to political history in its relation to the Modern Course, and it has fittingly been proposed in your communication column to relegate this objectionable portion of history to its proper sphere of usefulness and interest in the Political Science Department. The vacancy caused by the precipitate flight of all effete dynasties and tyrannies would demand a corresponding increase of attention to pure literary history, and only to its political counterpart when each is lamentably embroiled with the other (to the detriment of both).

Your editorial last week was admirable and covered most of the theoretical ground. I should merely have written to thank you for it, had I not thought that a more practical examination of the question would be profitable, and to that end let us examine the curriculum.

I think the study of purely imaginative poets, Coleridge for instance, is somewhat too advanced to be of any advantage whatever in school preparations for Matriculation. It seems even sacrilegious thus unappreciatively to accustom oneself to parse and punctuate emotion. The early study of Shakespeare suffers, it is true, from the same objection, but it is not unwise to obtain, even at an early age, a universally acknowledged standard, by which to judge of the worth of all literature in all lands. But let not Coleridge be attacked in the presence of those whose poetical judgments are still raw, with all the unintentional virus that exudes from pedantic ignorance. Let school-boys retain and love the descriptive and narrative portions of their Byrons, Scotts and Thomsons, and of their Shakspeare (for reasons before mentioned).

The selection of poets in the first year is sensible. A continuation of Shakspeare, an insight gained into the first birth of our literature, and a study of our most classically refined master. I simply ask for a continuation of this excellent consecutive study of our poets, and resent the present incompleteness of a method which denies us aid for insight into the culmination of all past tendencies of the ages which we have tracked by the paths of their poets.

Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley are not considered too modern for a denial of admittance to the Fourth Year literature. These great names unjustly, though brilliantly, end the chronological list of poets. The names of immortal contemporaries are not as yet, by virtue of their bearers' respective and obliging demises, rendered sufficiently holy for consideration. No greater mistake of judgment was ever made. The works of Tennyson, Swinburne, Rossetti, and Browning demand instant and intelligent attention. In them we find our passionate strivings, hopes, and despairs, not incarnated, but spiritualized for our spiritual guidance. In them we find a continuation of the united effort of the early heroes of this century, and a worthy maturity it is of a glorious birth.

I have read Professor Alexander's work on Browning, and all who have read it must feel the utmost confidence in his ability to deal adequately with all the intricate phases of contemporary literature. He has shown critical discernment of a high order, and I feel sure that he will appreciate beauty wherever it may be found. Let not his enthusiasm be trammelled with restrictions imposed by those who do not profit in any way by his teaching. And above all let him seek his own way to do the greatest good, which cannot be attained by completely ignoring the poetry of our own particular generation, a period in the world's history whose merits we surely should recognize with as much delight as our descendants of the third and fourth generations of the centuries to be.

PELHAM EDGAR.

RECEPTION TO THE FRESHMEN.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—I trust that I shall be forgiven for lifting up my still small voice at this eleventh hour, and above all I hope that my motives in writing will not be mistaken. My object in referring to this subject is not to obtain a repast of cakes and coffee, partial as I am to those delicacies, nor yet to seek to obtain for one brief evening the company of my seniors, dearly as such an evening would be cherished in my memory; no, my object is to advance the interests of the undergraduate body, which we all have so much at heart, and to endeavour to foster that spirit of good-fellowship which, if we are to believe the prophets, is in danger of extinction. Two years ago, I am told, the Seniors tendered an evening "at home" to the then Freshmen, the present Juniors, many of whom I have heard refer in glowing terms to the success of the entertainment. Ever since October I have been looking forward to the possibility of our receiving similar attentions, but alas in vain. Perhaps the Seniors are afraid we wouldn't come! I can re-assure them on that point. I would be willing to guarantee that ninety-five per cent. of us would show up. I believe, too, that with a little persuasion the ladies might be induced to attend, for they have become part and parcel of our Class of '92. Relying on your well-known impenetrability to preserve my incognito, I am, yours etc.,

TYRO.