

THE COLLEGE PAPER

UPON many points connected with the scope and management of a college paper differences of opinion may conceivably arise. How often shall it be issued? How many pages shall it contain? How shall its contributions be secured? How far shall it be limited to university topics? These questions and many more of the same class can never be answered in any rigid way. They must be settled with a view to local circumstance and the material in sight. Let us leave aside all such debatable matters until we have reached some substantial basis of agreement from which to set out. That we can find common ground I am convinced.

Perhaps the surest fact which has yet been ascertained concerning the successful management of college papers is the following simple one. No daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly sheet—indeed, not even a “quarterly”—has ever been kept alive for any length of time by a small group of self-sacrificing enthusiasts. I am speaking, of course, with due regard to quality. In the first place the editors have a great deal of their own work to do. They are usually honour students of one school or another; not necessarily students of literature, but men more alive than the average undergraduate is to the need of constantly cultivating in college the faculty of expression. The same kind of energy which they bring to the task of reading manuscript, proof, etc., and to the other routine drudgery of journalism, they presumably show in their private work. They are ambitious of standing well at the end of the year, and while freely giving much of their time they cannot give it all. Where the editors and their immediate friends are left to contribute nine-tenths of the “copy” the paper either degenerates or dies. It will be understood that in speaking thus I do not glance at any particular board of editors whatever. I refer to an undeniable condition. The burden is heavy. Where a few persons assume it they either neglect their recognized studies, which they should not and seldom do, or else having soon exhausted their stock of genuinely original poems, stories and essays, they are reduced to the sad necessity of “padding” their columns with whatever comes within reach.

Moreover, a few students, even when invested with editorial functions, do not represent the total wit and talent of the undergraduate body as these should be represented in a sheet which carries the university name to the public book stalls, and, by exchange, to other places of learning throughout the country. The paper, in order to prosper, must not be the product of a “board” or of a “staff” but must draw its contributions with regularity from every class of every faculty. Just as in hydraulic mining a ten-inch stream of water means dividends and a half-inch stream means