

# COMMUNICATIONS.

## ESSAY WRITING.

*To the Editor of the Journal:*

DEAR SIR:—In that vivid description of Oxford student life from the pen of W. L. G. in a recent number of the JOURNAL, there is one point in particular which might be profitably applied to our work in Queen's. He says, "This task (a weekly essay) is compulsory on every Balliol student during the first two years of his course, no matter what his subject of study. . . . The effect of this essay system is good, especially because it forces students of science and mathematics to cultivate an acquaintance with English literature and philosophy, which is too often lacking in their Canadian brethren." The majority of students are so eager to specialize or to reach professional work, that it is extremely difficult to persuade them that they are seriously lacking in this respect. It is not putting it too strongly to say that the mathematical and scientific, and even the philosophical and classical students of our Canadian universities are disgracefully ignorant of modern literary and scientific questions with which every scholar should be familiar. This is due largely to the headlong rush through high school, through university and through professional school, till the insignia of professional standing have been obtained and then, culture, farewell!

Now, sir, perhaps no better antidote for this could be proposed than the essay system. Not that weekly essays should be demanded, for this would probably be at the expense of class-work and essays of special courses, but at least one every month would be of great value and should not overcrowd any student who is attempting a reasonable amount of work. It may be argued, however, that the literary societies of the college should do this work. The answer to this is, that in these societies the few and not the many do the work and reap the benefit, and that the rank and file of the students can be touched only by every one of them being required to write such essays. They might not be able to treat the questions profoundly or exhaustively, but not the least benefit would be the clearing up of their ideas and expressing them in literary form. The subjects assigned should be of general interest, not too difficult or too technical, and suitable books should be recommended. In this way every student would be compelled to extend his vision beyond the narrow limits of his special course.

Our gracious senate receives so much advice from aspiring educationalists, that I let loose this suggestion with considerable timidity, but in adopting some such plan they would be following the example of one of the most successful educational institutions in the old land.

GRAD.

## TOM'S BHOYS.

*Mister Editor:*

DERE SOR:—It's long since I writ ye and now I'll till ye somethin' about the bhoys who are lavin' me, for who knows thim, sez I, better than mesilf, for I sees thim all the time, and hears thim too, and don't have to kape me ears open aithur. Shure don't they come to me house at 3 in the mornin' and shout, "Tom are ye up," the d—ls what do they think I'd be doin' up so late. What a hape of trouble I heves to watch thim all, and thim fellows of the first year are the wurst I ivir sot eyes on. Sometimes I think they have a dozen waggins in the "Din," and I slide quickly down the bannishter and everythin' is in the middle of the floor, hats, coats, rubbers, moccasins, chairs, table legs, and thim fellows as innocent looking as lambs. Be the howly smoke! I niver cotch any one who breaks anythin' for thim loons of divinities break everythin', and I knows it.

Now I'll till ye somethin' about thum. There's Mr. McEwen, the bhoys call him Alik, the President of the Æsculapian Society. A noice fillow he is, nate and trim and a good singor. He allus sings about some swate Maree, but they wont till me who she is. I have no trouble to watch him. He attends all his classes, passes everythin' and even at the dinner they tells me he passed it to the nixt man. He'll make a good docthur.

Then there's Mr. Ames, he's our Secritary. I don't know much about him but what I thinks to mesilf. I don't converse much wid him because I'm no good to sympathise and he allus looks lonesome. He's here at ivery class, carries his books, and thinks an awful lot. He's the chap who got tin dollars from the Æsculapian, and now me jewels of the 3rd year will hev d—I a cint for the summer session. He wears sharp pointed whiskers and the bhoys till me the nurses don't like thim. I guess he'll do well.

Nixt ther's Mr. Hagar, the tallest and thinnest med. in the college. Shure don't I see his name on the saling of ivery room in the college, and shure isn't the dissectin' room 20 fate hoigh. They tills me he laves his boardin' house 5 minutes late and is here on time. He's a hustler too at exams. and allus near the top. Yis he'll honor us if he quits growin' and I'll trot him out against the council.

Nixt there's Marselis. When he com in I niver thought to git that bhoys, to be sober and grave lookin' like a docthur. But some days in his furst year he slept late and his bhoish look wore off, and now, thanks to mesilf, he's as good as the bist of thim. When he laves in the spring I wish him good loock and so does ivery student.

There's Harry McKeown, me curly-headed bhoys. When he com in all the gurruls would mate me