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### Correspondence.

To the Editor of the UNIVERSITY GAZETTE, McGill College, Montreal.

I have been very much interested in the reading of your new paper. That article on "The Pursuit of Natural History in Montreal and Vicinity" I regard as of great value to any undergraduate of McGill whose tastes are similar to my own. That the article was true in many respects I felt assured, from the slight examinations I made of the region. To a stranger, or one not well acquainted with the region, I should say that single article was well worth the year's subscription of one dollar, if he had the least taste for this most fascinating of studies. Your paper seemed to offer several pieces of a humorous cast, and this of course, in my eyes, is a decided advantage. Whatever has been the opinion in years past, we firmly believe that mankind in general, and students in particular, are amply justified in making as free a use of their laughing capacity as possible.

The student of mediæval times may have supposed that an asinine length of countenance, an owl-like incapacity to see anything of a light and sunny character, was an unerring indication of super-Solomonian wisdom. I understand that the same philosophers had likewise violent prejudices on the subject of ever washing their faces or persons lest it should injure their character for erudition. In short, we may well afford to cast aside such foolish ideas, with many others also, more noted for antiquity than for merit, into the world's old clothes-basket and rubbish-room.

True, as Shakespeare says, "a man may smile and yet be a villain." But if he never laugh through fear of hurting his facial and mental epidermis *he is sure to be one.* I for one look upon him as a solemn fraud, a starched humberg, vainly trying to conceal his poverty of brain by his pomposity of manner and dignified (!) stupidity. No! by all means let us have a fair share of wit and humor in our college periodicals.

No columns in our papers, college or otherwise, are more popular than those filled with the "Puniphigrams," "Bon Mots," "Facetiae," or whatever else they may be called. I know that a great deal of criticism is poured upon the head of our busy, bustling, nervous, restless Yankee nation. Well, if we do live fast, if we do chase the "almighty dollar" at a "lightning express" speed, we always can spare an odd moment to laugh and have our joke. Witness the success of Josh Billings' quaint wit; Artemus Ward's and Mark Twain's nonsense; Petroleum V. Nasby's side-splitting letters on politics; and just now our new light in the comic side of American journalism, Bailey, the "Danbury (Conn.) News Man."

The zest with which the combined wit and wisdom of these journalists is received by the reading public, and the vast success of these writings in a pecuniary point of view, prove pretty conclusively that the views of the 19th century favor a cheerful Christianity, not a solemn hypocrisy. The old Greek teacher Democritus, who was styled "The Laughing Philosopher," would feel quite happy to find that our driving Western world can sympathize so fully with the laughter-loving Greek of the ancient time, could he but revisit the earth.

I would like very much at some time to visit McGill University in session and see the inner workings of the institution. I would like to see how your undergraduates compare with those of our colleges.

I have somehow an impression, a very erroneous one perhaps, that your College is more nearly like the European universities than ours in the States; that probably there is rather less class feeling than in our colleges; perhaps as much *esprit de corps* as we have, but manifested in different ways from our own. You will understand my object, perhaps, when I tell you that during my college course at Amherst we started a college paper called the *Amherst Student*. It was about the year 1868 when it was begun, with a board of editors to be chosen annually from the Junior class. It was the aim to make the paper as exactly as possible an exponent of the living, breathing student of just that date. The Faculty and Corporation of the College, Board

of Trustees, Alumni, etc., lent their hearty co-operation, and the paper has continued down to the present time, and is most emphatically a success as we think. We had two things to do. *First*, to make the paper a living thing in the minds of the students. *Second*, to make it necessary in some sense to the graduates. It seems to me that on the whole the wished-for result has been brought about in quite a large degree.

To interest the undergraduate, he was made to contribute to it. If he had said an uncommonly brilliant thing, or otherwise, he was put under bonds, so to speak, to let the rest of the College world share in his enjoyment. If he had committed an unusually ludicrous mistake in the class-room; if the professor had made an especially apt and witty remark, it was and is pretty apt to find its way into the columns of the *Student*.

Of course the names of the actors were not usually given, but the stories were told in an *impersonal* manner as possible. Still again the paper has been the constant mouth-piece of the *Reformers*.

Well, you know this axiomatic fact, viz.: that this is pre-eminently an age of reformers and reforms. An Anglo-Saxon is a born reformer, or *thinks* he is.

An English-speaking man without some "mission" so-called, some pet hobby of reform to nurse, sickly bantling though it may be, is of all men most wretched. He is classed either as an idiot or an unthinking, unfeeling knave. Some one has said that our natures, as human, demand *somebody or something* to love. Granted; but, certainly, this age demands with equal eagerness somebody or something to *hate* and denounce at all times and on every occasion. Whether the person is an ancient spinster hating the "harmless necessary cat," or the young Solon of the village store, uttering his philippics against the selectmen and Town Clerk of the place, we are sure to have something to declaim against. Just so with Young America in our colleges. Not a student but feels abundantly able to criticize and condemn the course the President and Faculty have taken in regard to this thing or that of general interest to the college. Just in this point, I think, is to be found the Scylla and Charybdis of our college newspapers.

The students must, in the abundance of their wisdom, try to instruct the professors, and the latter, taking their energetic attempts to correct and direct the management of affairs as gross insolence, use their influence and authority to ruin the paper and prevent its publication. I think this has been the history of very many college papers. I cannot but admire the dignified and wise attitude taken by our professors at Amherst; never, apparently, noticing in the least the sharpest and most ill-natured criticisms of their conduct; but simply trusting to the sober second thought and good sense of the students and Alumni to approve their course. I think that the utmost liberty of speech has been allowed in the columns of the paper; yet, notwithstanding this, I doubt if the professors of the College were ever more respected and loved by the students than at the present time. And it certainly seems as though both teachers and pupils are fast approaching that state of confidence in one another, and regard for each other's feelings and welfare, which is to be the grand and beautiful characteristic of the future school. In fact, I claim that this true ideal of their mutual relations is by no means a myth even now. It cannot be called Utopian (by us) so long as we think of teachers like Jesus Christ our Saviour, in Sacred History; Socrates, the old Greek; Arnold, of Rugby School, in England; Horace Mann, in America; and hundreds of noble men and women now toiling in the grand profession of teaching.

I spoke of the means adopted to make the College paper a live exponent of student life. I think a very successful means for interesting the Alumni has been to take advantage of the class feeling, which is oftentimes so strong. Every Alumnus is expected to let the editor know his present address and occupation. Has John Jones of his class done something of note; has he received a call to settle as a minister here; has he performed an unusually difficult operation in surgery; has he been chosen as counsel in a great law-suit; has he written this interesting article for the press, or invented some new machine—classmate No. 1 informs the whole class by means of the personal column as to what their classmate Jones is doing.

I have been struck again and again by the interest felt by Alumni in this part of the paper. It tends directly, of course, to renew old friendships and cement the ties formed in college. If you have not as yet introduced this feature into your paper, I can cordially recommend it, if your colleges are anything like ours. With earnest wishes for your success,

I am, yours truly,

E. A. T.

Woburn, Mass.