

THE PORTFOLIO.

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THE modern autograph album, that annoyance of city, and particularly college life, seems to be exciting condemnation in the columns of some of the college papers. Moderation in all things is desirable, and more especially so in the business of autograph hunting. If kept within the bounds of common sense there would be no need to complain of it, but the extent to which it is now carried is not only ludicrous but harassing. When first introduced its immediate and widespread popularity led us to fancy that, like other manias, it would soon die out; but still it lives, and each year numbers are added to the ranks of its supporters. The original intention of the album owners, so far as we can judge, was to collect for insertion in their books the autographs of people of repute; their next idea was to keep the books as records of the names of friends living at a distance, whom they did not wish to forget, and with whom it would have been unnecessary and irksome to correspond, an interchange of signatures especially adapted to the wants of school and college acquaintances; but now their object seems to be to get as much original poetry as they can, failing that to get as many signatures

as they can, whether of people they do or do not know it matters not, and, summing it all up, to accumulate by any and by every means an extensive collection of *trash*. Had the uses of the books never gone beyond the original intentions, there would now be no need for fault-finding, but they did, and as a result the autograph album has become a butt and a byword among us. One writer has compared them to mosquitos—like them they are formidable only when in swarms, but terribly so then. We heard of a case where a benighted traveller, lost in a swamp, was well nigh devoured by the vicious little insects. Singly they are quite as merciless, though far from formidable. The insects are not so gaudily apparelled as the books, and are only troublesome during the warm weather, whereas the albums assail us both winter and summer; we meet them at every turn and corner, and once having broken through the protecting net of writing nothing but our names, or worse still, having once committed ourselves to "something original," our only consolation lies in the hope that at some future date the ban of fashion may mitigate our woes. Then the amount of "original" nonsense, unlawfully termed poetry, which we find in them, is simply a disgrace to this enlightened age; or a writer pointedly puts it, "uninspired poetry, as has been oftentimes remarked, is one of the most obnoxious evils of the time." But this part of our subject has been exhaustively treated of already. As a remedy for this growing evil we would suggest the making of a rule—that the albums be limited to the holding of that only for which they were intended, namely, autographs.

"For modes of government let fools contest,
That which is best administered is best."

POPE was a very wise man, we all know that, and the more we read of his works the more are we impressed with the fact. But surely, in this case, he must have been wise only as to his own "day and generation," for could we now-a-days thus classify all contestants for particular modes of government, many an undisputed title to a fair share of that valuable article "wisdom" would be destroyed. From this, then, we should judge that in the time of the poet the "modes of government" were much alike,