

ROUND THE TABLE.

As an example of a strange perversity of thought, and of ponderous joking, the following extract from our worthy contemporary, *The Canadian Practitioner*, is among the most extraordinary which have found their way to the Round Table :

"It was generally remarked by those in attendance at the last College Convocation, that the conduct of the students was very objectionable. Those present would not, as a rule, object to a little fun, or an occasional snatch of a college song, but such rudeness as interrupting the speakers, or firing "darts" so promiscuously as to annoy the ladies in the audience, is simply intolerable, and should be stopped by the authorities of the college if certain students have lost all sense of shame and decency."

So far so good. Here is where the joke (*sic*) begins :

"It is, fortunately, quite probable that the new order of things will make a vast improvement in the morals and manners of the Arts' students. The establishment of a Medical Faculty in the University will, of course, introduce new blood, and it is expected that the refining effect of a more intimate contact with medical students will soon be shown by a thorough renovation of the whole establishment!"

The Round Table is of opinion that the genial editor of the *Practitioner* will have to operate surgically upon the Arts' students before they will realize to the full the magnificent possibilities of his elephantine joke. Wit is a two-edged sword which we are afraid the aforesaid editor has grasped by the blade instead of the hilt this time. As a Past Master of the Art of Satire, however, he is unsurpassed.

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When THE VARSITY expressed its opinion in regard to the great and perplexing question of the feeding of the five hundred, it was in blissful ignorance that its sentiments were not in unison with those of that renowned apostle of the Experiential School of Philosophy, Herbert Spencer. THE VARSITY, it will be remembered, advocated a series of small and select dinners in place of a monster banquet. Straightway, two of the Round Table were appointed to assist in carrying out the latter scheme, and to crown all, a friend of theirs drew their attention to the following extract from the *Data of Ethics*, probably to justify the capricious action above mentioned :

"The truth that the fundamental vital actions—those of nutrition—are furthered by laughter-moving conversation, or rather by the pleasurable feeling causing laughter, is one of old standing; and every dyspeptic knows that in exhilarating company a large and varied dinner, including not very digestible things, may be eaten with impunity, and indeed with benefit, while a small, carefully chosen dinner of simple things, eaten in solitude, will be followed by indigestion!"

Against such an authority what can avail the opinion of the Editors of THE VARSITY!

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During the three years in which the writer has been privileged to attend the lectures in Philosophy, he has never ceased to wonder at one of the illustrations continually used by the venerable professor in that department. This feeling of astonishment will, doubtless, be shared in by many when it is stated that the illustration referred to is the celebrated one of "the ribbon—blue at one end and red at the other." Its force and character are largely extrinsic, being due rather to incongruity than to probability, to frequency of repetition than to possibility of existence—for, who ever saw a "ribbon—blue at one end and red at the other"? The writer has often wondered why it has never occurred to the Professor of Mental and Moral Science to substitute for his mythical and impossible ribbon the editorial lead-pencil, which is "red at one end and blue at the other." This useful instrument of journalism combines all the essentials which the ribbon is considered to possess, and, in addition, has that character of truth and possibility about it which this practical and prosaic age demands.

The following lines, written by the gentleman who sits at the bottom left-hand corner of THE TABLE, and graciously dedicated to the Song Book Committee, remind one of the days before the flower and fruit of love had gone :

"It was fifty years ago or mebbe a little mo',
And the "ole darkey's" eyes began to shine,
"But it seems jes' like a day since the niggers all so gay
Lightly shook de foot one night in Caroline.

"Dar was Piccadilly Ned wid' de fuzz upon his head
Plastered thick an' mighty stiff wid' possum ile,
And Pennithimble Toots wid' de taller on his boots
An' a necktie ob de berry latest style.

"Now dis nigger can't tell all dat was present at de ball,
But de girls dey was a mighty putty sight
As dey all stood in a row jes' behind de cabin do'
But you bet dey didn't stan' dere all de night.

"For ole Cookishee wid' de banjo on his knee
As he sot upon de table all alone
Oh! his breath he fairly held, "Up an' down de middle," he
yelled,
An' I tell you he made de ole banjo groan.

"An' de girls te-he-he when a funny nigger he
Rolled de table an' de player on de flo'
An' de niggers yaw-ha-haw when dey ole 'ookie saw
'Crawlin' off, cause he would'nt play no mo'."

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A propos of certain criticisms of Mr. Howells in the *Vassar Miscellany*, the Poet of THE TABLE inscribes the following to our charming contemporary :

With college maidens' dreamings
Mr. Howells can't be but at strife;
For the Romantic School is—Vassar,
The Realistic, Li'e.

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And behold now, the Ingenious Man laid hold upon the unwitting Scribe, and caught him by the beard, and spake unto him this parable, saying : "Behold, as I went up into the Temple of Learning to pay my morning sacrifice unto Minerva, I saw two of her votaries. And the one spake unto the other, and behold he said, 'Art thou working now?' meaning thereby, as thy servant believeth : 'dost thou waste the midnight oil upon the study of the ancients?' And lo, he to whom the questioner put his question was a gay youth, clad in bright raiment, having a 'cholly' upon his head withal, and sandals upon his feet, and fine-twined and starched linen upon his neck and about his wrists; and, moreover, he had coverings of the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and an oaken staff carried he also, for what reason I wist not. And now, behold, this youth spake and answered and said, 'Verily, I burn the midnight oil in the service of the goddess whose votary I am.' And the other learner said unto him again, 'Now know I that thou liest unto me, for thy clothing betrayeth thee; verily thou art not a worker, or thou wouldest not clothe thyself in fine Apparel.' And behold straightway, having said this, he fell upon his companion and beat him sore, and rent his clothes and evil-entreated him until thy servant wist not what should be the end thereof." And truly this parable teaches many things hard to be understood. It ordereth that no one shall wear that which becometh him, but rather that which becomes him not. And above all it sheweth to what a pitch Democracy and Jeffersonian Simplicity have been carried by this generation, which lusteth after many things that are not lawful. And behold when he had heard these words the Scribe hasted and gat him up into his own place and set down in order the words of the Ingenious Man, and behold they remain even unto this day.