

PRIZES.

In the last issue of the "COLLEGE JOURNAL" appeared a lengthy article on the subject of "prizes," in which the writer, after an untrammelled sweep of six pages, suddenly turns off at right angles from his theme to throw an ungenerous imputation on the integrity of a fellow-student. Here are his words: "There is one student who takes a rather strange position. He frankly admits that much more can be said against prizes than in their favor; but, but, but he believed that he would like to see them continued,"—followed by a satirical, side-splitting anecdote. The manifest design of O. P. Q. in penning these words was to bury the unfortunate student referred to in the grave of speechless humiliation, by dint of sarcasm. Had this last sentence, which I have quoted, been delivered before a public audience, accompanied by the appropriate gestures, a significant pause between each *but*, with a look of intense surprise at the close, it would doubtless have produced an electric effect. But appearing as it did on the rigid, unemotional columns of the "College Journal," it became reduced to a species of literary stuttering, more calculated to provoke a smile than to excite pity for or indignation against the object of attack. Now, as I have reason to believe that I am the hapless student whom O. P. Q. had in his mind's eye, let me offer a word of defence. To begin with, the writer has not made a fair representation of the cursory remark which fell from my lips in private conversation. What I did say was, that *for purposes of argument* I would rather go against prizes, but yet I preferred to see them continued. The statement involves no inconsistency whatever. The question of prizes is one in which the arguments for and against are *probable* rather than *demonstrative* in their nature, and in all questions of this kind it is inherently easier to attack than to defend. Let O. P. Q. pit himself against a well equipped atheist to prove the divine existence, and he will be made painfully conscious of the force of my remark. A fool can pull down in one hour what it will take a wise man a hundred years to build up, but that doesn't necessarily condemn the workmanship of the wise man. And so, with respect to prizes, it requires less mental calibre to criticize than to defend; and hence by strict logical inference, the only thing implied in my statement was, that in virtue of my limited capacity, I would do myself more justice by arguing against prizes than by advocating their continuance. The latter requires brains; the former does not.

While I candidly admit that I am no enthusiast either for or against the giving of prizes, yet my sympathies have hitherto been on the side of their continuance, nor can I detect in O. P. Q.'s arguments any peculiar force that would alter my views on the question. The writer sets forth no less than nine points against prizes. His first position is, that prizes "fail in the