

ROTTEN ROW.

The Residence must be cleared by Wednesday, in order to be ready for the painters, whitewashers, etc. Verily this a change.

The lawn in the quadrangle, is in a most deplorable condition. The grass can hardly be seen for dandelions.

Miss M. E. Henderson, who won the prize in English Verse on Rienzi, is a sister of A. Henderson, jr.

Residence this year has a graduating class of fourteen, including a gold medalist and a prizeman.

The auction sale of Mr. Vines' effects took place on the 22nd of May, at the Dean's residence.

Prof. Hutton will, we understand, remain in Residence next year.

College News.

WYCLIFFE COLLEGE.

The annual meeting of the Wycliffe College Literary Society for the election of officers for the coming year was held on Thursday evening last, the Rev. Geo. M. Wrong, President, in the chair. The following officers were elected:

President, Rev. Geo. M. Wrong, B.A.

Vice-president, Mr. R. L. Sloggett.

Secretary, Mr. Geo. E. Lloyd.

Treasurer, Mr. E. C. Acheson.

Curator, Mr. A. J. Murphy.

Committee-men, Messrs. A. C. Miles and G. J. Watsor.

On the same evening a meeting of the Mission Society in connection with the College was held, Mr. W. G. Armitage, President, in the chair. Officers for the ensuing year were appointed as follows:

President, Mr. A. W. Daniel.

Vice-president, Mr. G. H. Gaviller.

Secretary, Mr. J. C. Robinson.

Treasurer, Mr. T. R. O'Meara.

Committee, Messrs. H. P. Hobson and A. W. Dewdney.

INTERCOLLEGIATE MISSION ALLIANCE.

At a general meeting held some time ago by the Wycliffe College Mission Society, M. A. W. Daniel was appointed to read a paper on the 'Life and Work of Bishop Heber in India,' at the convention of the Intercollegiate Missionary Alliance, to be held in Toronto next October.

ARTISTIC PROFANITY.

There have been all sorts of definitions of man—a cooking animal, a tool-making animal, a laughing, playing, clothes-wearing animal, etc. I do not know that he has ever been defined as a swearing animal.

"Cats swear," do you say? So they do. But this is not the species of profanity to which I wish more particularly to refer. The peculiar sound emitted by an infuriated feline is for an intimidating effect I fancy, coupled, I suppose, with the desire of encouraging itself. The Greek paan probably is the most evolved form this sound has taken amongst men; whether or not Scotch military bag-pipes are an example of retrogression, I am afraid to conjecture.

No; the profanity I mean is—ahem! is Exactly; that is the kind of thing I mean.

I confess to a secret liking for an occasional coruscation of profanity. Not the incessant cintillation with which the French are wont to brighten their conversation. Much less the pale, colourless, lambent, but, at the same time, very much more sulphurous flame which Germans so constantly enkindle; but an occasional downright lightening flash—in short, a "Big, big D."

I venture to think I am not peculiar in this. Indeed, I am sure I am not, for a somewhat laughable incident I once saw gave me excellent proof of the existence in others of this exquisite relish for such sort of (doubtless, from a Puritanical point of view, reprehensible) ejaculation, and also a recognition of the supposed viciousness of such relish. It was at the representation of "Our American Cousin." Sothorn was acting. In a box sat a portly, very portly, matron and her two daughters. At every repetition of Dundreary's inimitable assertion that somebody or other was a—some sort of—fool, the jolly-looking mother was convulsed with uncontrollable laughter. It was delightful to see. Even to this day I cannot tell which amuses me more; the remembrance of

Dundreary's profanity, or the picture of that fat, comfortable-looking figure leaning back in the chair and heaving up and down till, through want of breath and a profusion of tears, the poor old lady was completely exhausted. It was, however, different with her daughters. The younger of the two—an extremely refined-looking young lady, who appeared as if she had but recently left school—not yet accustomed apparently to the thorough control of her emotions, hastily withdrew her face behind the curtains, but not before it had been visibly suffused with futile attempts at an appearance of impassivity. On the elder daughter's face certainly not a muscle moved; but the self-control was so apparent, that I would have wagered heavily that, at the before-going-to-bed chat with her sister, when away from all restraining influences, and divested of her (perhaps impeding) opera dress, etc., she too would give vent to the heartiest screams.

I must say that this scene greatly comforted me. I concluded that it was not the viciousness of my character, nor the vulgarity of my tastes, that impelled me to delight in this—so generally termed a—shocking mode of expression, and I came to the conclusion that, in certain cases, profanity was artistic. Henceforward the straight-laced may condemn, the (pseudo-) cultured may disapprove, but I shall strongly and unhesitatingly assert that an infrequent use of the milder and more harmless forms of imprecation is not only allowable and legitimate, but consonant with the highest decrees of the highest art.

I put great stress, mind you, upon the mildness and the rarity. It should be like a single olive in a sumptuous banquet, or a discordant note in a symphony. The older dramatists indulged in it to an extent intolerable to nineteenth century ears. Fluellen and Macmorris are fearful sinners in this respect (1)—I do not care to reproduce their expletives, even as clothed in the Cimbrian dialect. The rule of art is a moving rule. We have grown fastidious now-a-days.

There are, however, two modern instances which recur at the moment to my mind, which seem to me conclusively to point to a justification of my position. One is in Disraeli's "Venetia." At the critical point of the plot, where the Countess enters Lord Cadurcis's room in boy's apparel, the latter, on recognizing her, ejaculates "Gertrude, by —." If I remember rightly, this is the only example of such an expression in the whole book; it certainly has a most powerful effect. The other occurs in a novel of the name of "Foul Play." Here again, at the instant of the catastrophe, an old salt comes out with "Scuttled by —," and this is equally effective.

It was at first difficult to reconcile this view with the high moral character which, I felt convinced, all art should bear; for, although disagreeing with Ruskin when he says that two of the functions of art are to "enforce the religion of men," and to "perfect their ethical state," (2) yet I believe with Gæthe that "a good work of art may and will have good moral results." (3) Is this compatible with the use of profanity? That is the question. I say yes; and on these grounds: It is often but a meaningless ejaculation, and, as long as the expression is in harmony with the character of the person uttering it, everything is in congruity. This is a great consideration. Unparliamentary language from fair feminine lips would be unbearable—is impossible. Even from such language as uttered by those in a lower station in life—e.g.: the proverbial fishwife—we instinctively recoil. It is almost painful even to read some of the more racy conversations of Hostess Quickly and Doll Tearsheet.

But, secondly, even where profanity rises above this, where it is a sincere and forcibly expressed wish that—for example—the individual addressed might, in some peculiar fashion, lose his eyesight, or even he himself altogether bodily removed to another and lower sphere of action, is there not a kind of virtuous anger that is highly laudable; a righteous indignation; a be-ye angry-and-sin-not sort of ire that is soothing—not of course, to the object of one's wrath, but certainly to oneself and one's sympathizers? Undoubtedly.

This being granted, it would be curious to trace the limits to which we might legitimately go in using profanity for artistic effect. As we increase in fastidiousness and niceness, we shall probably be satisfied with milder and milder forms of oaths. Already we have left a long way behind phrases which by our grandfathers even were considered permissible and tame. Indeed it would be instructive to trace the progress of refinement in the tastes of a people by an investigation of the variations in the precatory or imprecatory formulas of its literature. Nevertheless, to whatever lengths we may hereafter go in this direction, I shall still maintain that some form or other of the prevailing profanity of the day is perfectly justifiable and artistic.

T.A.H.