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Editorial Comments.



APPENDED to the University curriculum for 1890-91 is a paragraph announcing the various medals offered for competition at the approaching examination. Herein it is stated that the medal will be awarded in Modern Languages in the Third Year, and not as heretofore in the Fourth. This change is entirely reasonable in view of the fact that there exists under the new curriculum an option of subjects in the work of the Fourth Year. It would of course be impossible to award a medal among men taking different work. Yet while it is necessary that such a change should ultimately be made in order to suit the new curriculum, it is hardly just that it should be made this year. The new curriculum has not yet come into effect—at present all Fourth Year students in this course work upon the same conditions and do substantially the same work as hitherto. There would be no difficulty in making a decision among them. Yet according to this arrangement no one in the class will receive a medal. The case would be entirely different and there would be no ground for complaint if the awarding of medals were to cease with the present year. But such is not the case. The future classes will receive medals as have the previous ones. Upon one class alone will fall the injustice of not having a chance to compete for a medal, and that class—the Class of '91. We are not going to question the wisdom of the Senate in making a change in the rules covering the award of the medal, before such a change was rendered absolutely necessary by the requirements of the new curriculum, although we must confess that we see no reason for the hasty action they have taken in this matter; they might have continued to award the medal to the Fourth Year as in the past until the revised curriculum comes in force *in toto*, and injustice would have been done to no one. Be that as it may, however, it is a matter of slight importance compared with the injustice that is being perpetrated on the present Fourth Year students in Moderns. Here is a class that had no chance for a medal in its third year, and whose right to compete for one in its fourth year is now rendered null and void by an arbitrary measure on the part of the Senate. Only special legislation can prevent injustice of some kind or other being done. Let the Senate award two medals this year: a special one for the out-going Fourth Year class in Moderns, the old one (according to the new rules), to the present Class in the Third Year. Such an action would be commended by all, and would avoid all shadow of injustice. We would advise the Modern Languages students of the Fourth Year to petition the Senate to this effect, for we feel that the matter only needs to be brought before their notice to receive the special legislation that it most certainly deserves and in all justice absolutely demands.

In another column there is quite a lively discussion on the subject of Second Year Pass German. This has been partially aroused by an editorial note appended to a letter on the subject by "Sophomore" in last week's issue—rather by a misapprehension of the meaning of the note than by the note itself. We thought we had made our meaning clearly, but apparently some have misinterpreted what was said. The note did not "raise any objection to the reduction of the German" as is stated in the letter of "Political Science Soph."; on the other hand it very clearly disavowed the intention of "giving a decision as to the merits of the case." We wished then and we wish now to protest against what is implied in the following statement of "Sophomore": "Now the study of these languages (*e.g.* Greek, German, French or Hebrew) by minds philosophically inclined may, perhaps, be best described by saying that it consists of the learning of facts without even the relief of theory. Thus to the writer's humble understanding the variety of mental training afforded here is exceedingly slight." That was a direct expression of the opinion, not that there is too much German on the course, but that German or any other language is superfluous to students of philosophy. Experience and common sense have so clearly shown that such a position is untenable that we could not refrain from urging the Second Year students of philosophy not to agree with "Sophomore" in his judgment as to the value of the study of German to them. Had "Sophomore" kept to his text, namely, that there is too much Second Year pass German and left general principles alone no objection to his position would have been taken. But "Sophomore" himself agrees with us as will be seen by reading his second letter; he acknowledges the value of the study of German, which it is plain, from his words at least, he perhaps unthinkingly denied in his first letter. Now as to the question of the amount of German we are free to confess that the Second Year pass German is probably more difficult than it ever was before; there is no doubt but that the philosophy men, if they have not studied German before matriculation and in their first year, will find it rather hard to translate all of it and at the same time get up the grammar. But the remedy for this seems to lie in preparation before entering the University and not in lowering the amount of work to be done during the course. Space prevents us from enlarging on this idea, but in a future issue we hope to return to the subject and discuss the question more thoroughly.

Thirty-one of the 289 members of the senior class at Harvard have already obtained degrees from other colleges.

An association has been formed of Brown alumni for the purpose of assisting Brown graduates wishing to take work in the German universities. This is the first organization of its kind in America.