

discouraged at his apparent little influence, even though every sally of every young life may seem like a forlorn hope. No man can see the whole of the battle. It must needs be that regiment after regiment, trained, accomplished, gay and high with hope, shall be sent into the field, marching on into the smoke, into the fire and be swept away. The battle swallows them, one after the other, and the foe is yet unyielding and the ever-remorseless trumpet calls for more and more. But not in vain, for some day, and every day, along the line there is a cry, "They fly, they fly!" and the whole army advances, and the flag is planted on an ancient fortress where it never waved before. And even if you never see this, better than inglorious camp-following is it to go in with the wasting regiment; to carry the colors up the slope of the enemy's works, though the next moment you fall and find a grave at the foot of the glaciis.—From *Backlog Studies*, by Charles Dudley Warner.

PYTHAGORAS.

And, knowing these things, can I stoop to fret,
And lie, and haggle in the market place,
Give dross for dross, or everything for nought?
No! let me sit above the crowd, and sing,
Waiting with hope for that miraculous change
Which seems like sleep; and though I waiting starve,
I cannot kiss the idols that are set
By every gate, in every street and park;
I cannot fawn, I cannot soil my soul:
For I am of the mountains and the sea,
The deserts and the caverns in the earth,
The catacombs and fragments of old worlds.

—THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

Communications.

THE PRIZE POEM.

To the Editor of the VARSITY:

SIR,—Your remarks in the last issue of the VARSITY on the subject of the Prose and Verse competitions are timely and judicious. As to the time of announcement of the subjects for the year, I am informed that they are always set by the 1st of November. The delay is owing to the printers, who do not print the list until they bind the examination papers of the previous year in which it is included. In future it would be well to post up the list as soon as it is issued.

There has been great dissatisfaction among the University poets for some years with the manner of the competition for the prize poem. In 1884 the subject was "Columbus," when the prize was taken by Mr. T. B. P. Stewart, and, though it is not my intention to offer a criticism upon the poem, which I thought very good, I think he will agree with me that it is not equal to other productions of his. In 1885 the subject was the "Death of Thomas Newcome," perhaps the finest passage in Thackeray's writings. I have reason to believe that not one of our men who are known to write respectable verse competed for the prize last year. This year it is to be "The U. E. Loyalists," a more unpromising subject than either of the others. Probably the sort of spring we have will decide whether the prize will be given or not, though it is not always safe to prophesy.

But I have a suggestion: Why not abolish the setting of subjects altogether? It is not fair to cramp the intellect in the high-

est possible way in which it can do original work. There are only too few opportunities to a student as it is, to do the best kind of work. Would it not be a good idea, instead of demanding a poem on a given subject, within a given time, to take the best poem of, say over fifty lines in length, published in the VARSITY during the current year, written by an undergraduate, and give the prize for it? The writer may, in that case, consult his own taste and feeling as to his subject, and may, if he wishes, take the whole four years of his course to elaborate his thought. The limit of fifty lines may be objected to, but my reason for suggesting it is that, if there were to be no restriction at all, there would be an opportunity for offering matter not quite original, and though it is not probable that difficulties of that kind would arise, yet, if all an editor's secrets were made known, it might be found that at some time in his existence second-hand matter had been offered him as original.

There is a further reason for my suggestion. The VARSITY is doing really good work of a literary kind, and the University authorities would be doing a graceful act in thus recognizing it as a factor in our educational system.

J. O. MILLER.

February 26th, 1886.

THE LITERARY SOCIETY.

To the Editor of the VARSITY:

SIR,—In a letter which appeared in your issue of the 13th, the following sentence occurred: "To prevail upon the students to attend both minor and general societies seems impossible, so again are we faced with the question, Must the Literary Society go?"

As long as the old order of things is retained by the Society, little interest will be taken in its proceedings. The College Council will not allow us to discuss questions of party politics, nor kindred subjects. Something else, then, must be found that will attract students. The Modern Language Club has found no difficulty in securing a good attendance at its English meetings, at which a considerable amount of good work has been done. I see no reason why such work should not be taken up by the Literary Society, every second Friday being devoted to it. This would give plenty of opportunity for essay-writing, readings, and even for speaking. A programme could be made out and published before the end of the year, thus giving everyone fair notice of what is to be done.

Besides a change of programme, something else is perhaps necessary, viz.: a change in the hour of meeting, say from eight to four o'clock. The newer clubs have found it advisable to meet in the afternoon. On Friday night there are generally outside attractions.

There is one other point. During the past year a spirit very nearly resembling that of rowdyism has made its appearance. How can it be expected that students will go to the trouble of writing an essay, or preparing a speech or reading, when they know that they will be interrupted by all sorts of absurd and ill-timed remarks, which are intended to pass for wit. It is high time that those who indulge habitually in this practice should be made to understand that such conduct will not be tolerated. We can all be wearisome at times, and should, on that account, be willing to bear with others when they do not come up to our high standard.

If, then, we had a change of time, treatment of speakers, and of programme (for the Society now is literary only in name) there might be a new lease of life, and with it increased usefulness for this one of our oldest institutions.

A. H. YOUNG.