

true and interesting reports of the performers. If the star is 'indisposed,' our despatches invariably say that she quarrelled with the manager, or the leading support. Should the leading support be suffering from a 'severe cold,' we always say that he is 'drunk.' Thus you see we guarantee the public absolutely correct and reliable news, and that's what the public wants, and that's what the public will willingly pay for. Of course you will understand that I have only given you a very brief and imperfect outline of our system. I am enlarging and perfecting it every day. Our Bureau of Reliable Intelligence will be divided into several departments, such as (1) Political News, (2) Telegraphic News, (and here I would remark that our 'English Letters' and 'Foreign Letters,' from 'Our Own Correspondents,' are not written in our home offices, but actually come from the places where they are dated, and are furnished by our own travelling corps of writers, (3) Musical and Dramatic Criticism, and (4) Local News, and as many others as places and circumstances suggest. It's my own opinion that our Bureau of Reliable Intelligence should be made a Government Institution, same as the Telegraph and Postal Departments. I should be glad to have you give our Company a 'boom' in Toronto, as I see by reading your papers, which are most enterprising and readable otherwise, that the public must be sadly in need of *reliable* and *trustworthy* intelligence in regard to public affairs,—especially in political doings."

Thanking Col. Trewe for the interesting account of his most unique and singular project with which he had favored me, your correspondent withdrew, after promising to 'boom' the 'Bureau of Reliable Intelligence,' and the foregoing is the 'boom' thereof.

Toronto, 15th January, 1884.

ERIC.

MEDALS.

Whether the advice of 'Gold Medallist' to those seeking a medal, is good or not, and whether the devious ways by which he obtained one are, or are not, those usually followed, are questions which each will answer according to the bias of his own opinions. It is to be regretted that his modest estimate of his own attainments is coupled with so poor an opinion of those of the examiners. Many things combine to make very difficult, the securing of satisfactory examiners in our University. The curriculum is being rapidly extended, men who have had the advantages of a post-graduate course, and men engaged in teaching the subjects of examination, are seldom available. The appointments are made at too short a time prior to the examinations, to give those appointed the opportunities necessary to prepare well considered papers. And even if these appointments were made earlier, the remuneration is not sufficient to warrant any extensive preparation. Notwithstanding all these things, however, the majority will probably not be inclined to think our examiners men with hobbies, susceptible to flattery, and the unconscious dupes of artful candidates. In some cases they may not know any more of the subjects of examination than those they examine, but it is no more than reasonable and just to suppose that they understand clearly the questions they ask, and their correct answers. Instead of the examiners being the sport of the examined, the reverse is likely the much more frequent occurrence. It would not be difficult to believe that some of the answers of 'Gold Medallist' have afforded rare fun to examiners.

If there is any one thing which 'Gold Medallist' shews more conclusively than another, it is the need of an enlargement of the present examination hall. It is no easy matter to tell who is, or is not morally color-blind, when a chance for crookedness in an examination presents itself. Divinity students have been seen copying in Convocation Hall, while many others who would not hesitate to do things more particularly forbidden in the decalogue, would not be guilty of cribbing at an examination. It is undoubtedly the fact that the present hall does not give that assurance of freedom from unfairness on the part of competitors which it should.

So far as the gratuitous expressions of opinion from 'Gold Medallist' are concerned, they may be taken simply as such. It may be that it does not require brains to secure a medal. The one sample he presents does not prove or disprove it. It may be that, 'it is by a rare fluke that the best man gets the prize.' An examination of successive class lists, with a view to ascertaining in which department appear the greatest changes in the order of the names, would seem to indicate that this assertion, if restricted to the department of classics, might have some foundation in fact. It would be vain to deny that sometimes medals have not been bestowed in the spirit in which they were intended, and equally vain would it be to deny that

the differences between competitors have at times been so small as to make a medal too great a distinction. However, the opinion is tenable, and probably prevails, that in the great majority of cases, the prizes go to those the most deserving of them.

It is not to be understood that any plea is here made for the medal system. Happily the strongest arguments against it are not of so personal a character as those advanced by 'Gold Medallist.' Academic honors which appear so important to the majority of students, that anything like a generous rivalry is almost entirely precluded, which interpose a barrier to that friendship and good will towards one another which should animate college classmates, should not be conferred. A system which leads to stealing of note-books and copying at examinations, which obscures the ends and aims as well as a great many of the advantages of a collegiate training by placing before the student a false criterion of success, which tends to make education less liberal and more special, may have its excellences to compensate for these defects, but they are not obvious. That health is sometimes impaired, and that minds are frequently so strongly turned in one direction as to effectually resist any attempts to change them, in this absurd race after medals, can scarcely be doubted. To this last fact rather than to any lack of brains, is probably due, the result that few who have secured academic honors attain to eminence in any other than the teaching profession.

—T. G. C.

Communications.

To the Editor of the 'Varsity.

DEAR SIR,—Carlyle, Ruskin, and others have devoted much time to endeavors to impress upon their fellow men the importance of the truism that life is not long enough for one to read all the books that have been and are being published. It behooves those of us who wish to have a general knowledge of what is going on, in addition to a special knowledge of some particular branch to endeavor to obtain and read one or two of the best books on each subject.

In connection with this I have a suggestion to make. New books are continually being added to the University library, and reviews, English, French, and German, are periodically arriving, of many of which the majority of the undergraduates know nothing except, perhaps, the name, and many graduates have not even this advantage. Lists of new books are from time to time published, but nothing is said of the contents of the various reviews, each article of which deserves to be recorded just as much as if it were published in book form. The introduction of these into the lists would be of great advantage, especially, I may say, to science students.

But this is not enough. Let a column or so of each issue of the 'Varsity' be devoted to reviews of the new books and the articles in the latest reviews. It seems to me that such a column would be serviceable in more ways than one. It would supply not the mere name of the book, which in most instances indicates nothing, but a brief digest of the contents, whereby anyone could at once decide as to the advisability of devoting a few hours to their perusal. It would enable graduates and others residing out of Toronto to learn the nature of the additions, and thus enable them to economise any few moments they may be able to spare to a visit to the library when in the city. And lastly, but by no means least, it would enable young students to gain aptitude in reviewing, no unimportant talent in this age of criticism. Trusting that these suggestions may find favor in your eyes,

I remain,

Yours respectfully,

J. PLATFAIR McMURRICH.

Guelph, Jan. 18, 1884.

University of Toronto.

NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given to the Graduates, Undergraduates and friends of the University of Toronto that a BANQUET will be given in the Pavilion, Horticultural Gardens, on FRIDAY EVENING, 15th February, 1884.

As the number of tickets is limited, those who desire to obtain the same will please apply to the undersigned as soon as possible. Tickets \$2.

JOHN A. PATERSON, M.A., Secretary,
9 and 10 Masonic Hall, Toronto Street, Toronto.
Toronto, 21st January, 1884.