

which is announced the discovery of a new copepod parasite on the common clam—*mya arenaria*. It is the result of much labour and careful investigation entered into at a time when most people are trying to enjoy the sweets of a summer vacation. Other contributions to the same number, from Professor Wright, are:—(1) "On the cutaneous sense-organs of fishes;" (2) "On the fate of the spiracular cleft in *Amia* and *Lepidosteus*," and (3) "On the auditory organ of *Hypophthalmus*." It will thus be seen that the Professor of Biology contributes in no small degree to the work of maintaining and extending the reputation of our University and College in the scientific world. The parasite, which is the subject of the leading paper, was found in the gill-tubes of the clam, and is about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in length. The locality of its discovery is Little Métis, Que., whence comes its specific name. It will be known as "*Myicola Metisiensis*, Ramsay Wright."

Communications.

ATTENDANCE AT LECTURES.

To the Editor of THE 'VARSITY.

SIR,—The question you start in last week's 'VARSITY is one of the most important in the whole range of university topics. The assumption of which you approve—that participation in College life is itself an education—underlies all the efforts that have been made by universities to compel attendance at lectures. But something more than this assumption, even if it were universally true, would be needed to justify a law interfering with the students' freedom.

Some years ago the Senate passed a statute making attendance at an affiliated college absolutely compulsory during at least one of the last three years, and recently circumstances occurred which made it necessary to repeal this enactment. At present the regulation makes attendance at College necessary, except when a special dispensation is granted by the Senate. The principal effect of this rule, as dispensations are never refused when a plausible reason is urged, is to put the undergraduate who wants to read privately to the trouble of memorializing the Senate, and the Senate to the trouble of making a pretence of dealing with his application. I do not suppose any of the pleas put forward in these cases are "trumped up," but if they were the Senate has no means of ascertaining the fact; to do that body justice it has too much sense to enter into this line of investigation. I am not without hope that, your argument to the contrary notwithstanding, it will before long repeal even the present regulation, and welcome all to its examinations who think they can pass them, whether they have had an academical training or not.

You admit that some lectures are not worth attending, and all students will agree with you in this position. To compel an undergraduate to pay for what is of no value is bad enough; to make him actually appear a certain number of times each session in the class room is the height of absurdity. In one prominent American College it is stated in the annual announcement that all who intend taking the University Examinations must pay their lecture fees, but those who pay them are frankly told that attendance is purely optional. As a means of raising revenue this plan may serve a useful purpose; if there is good attendance in the classes it is probably due to the excellence of the tuition and not to the fact that the fees have been exacted. In University College, even under the present regulation, the students who are on the roll attend lectures far from regularly. What would be the consequence if the College Council were to report the delinquents to the Senate, and ask the latter body to refuse them the privileges of the University?

There are other ways in which men can acquire a liberal education besides mingling with students and listening to lectures. Take the case of a teacher, who, in addition to profiting by social intercourse, learns by teaching and from books. A good treatise on any subject is far more valuable than an inferior course of lectures, and the discipline afforded by even the best lectures is very defective unless they are supplemented by a course of reading. It is especially desirable in a country like ours to allow ambitious scholars the utmost freedom in this respect. We should not strive after uniformity so much as after robust self-reliance as a quality of our graduates; and one who, while engaged in making a living, reads the University Arts Curriculum for examination is quite as likely to do his Alma Mater credit as another who has passed at the expense of friends from the lowest class in the public school to his final university year without a single break in the continuity of his course.

In a paragraph in the last 'VARSITY you remark quite correctly that Edmund Gosse, who, if I am not mistaken, has at the early age of thirty-five been appointed to a distinguished university chair, had not the advantage, or disadvantage, of a university training. He had a very

good substitute, however, as he was appointed, at the age of eighteen, assistant librarian of the British Museum. Prof. Huxley had in his special line no university training in the ordinary sense of the term, his only college course being one in medicine. Prof. Tyndall graduated from the Ordnance Survey, and had become known as an original investigator before, at the age of twenty-eight, he spent some time at a German University. Under a regulation making attendance at lectures compulsory, Toronto University would be powerless to admit even a Gosse, a Huxley or a Tyndall to her examinations, and I am reluctant to believe that we have amongst us none of the material of which such eminent men are made. It may be said that now they have only to ask in order to get a dispensation. True enough, but I object to compelling them to prefer such a request. I would rather make them all welcome and take them on their own recognizances.

This matter becomes specially important in view of a possible federation of Colleges. Besides admitting to the examinations in the University those who attend no lectures at all, we should admit men who may prefer to take a course of lectures in one subject in one college and in another subject in another college. This would leave students free to take those lectures which they deem most advantageous to themselves, and of this they are the best judges. Such an arrangement would, moreover, tend to prevent stagnation in any one of the Colleges by placing them in close competition with each other in every department of the curriculum. Stagnation has been the bane of Toronto University and University College in the past, and until the lectures are all exactly what they should be it is vain to talk of compulsory attendance, even if compulsion were not on general principles objectionable.

Toronto, Feb. 23.

WM. HOUSTON.

To the Editor of THE 'VARSITY.

I do not like your view *in re* attendance at College, simply because I do not see how any body of examiners are able to decide to what extent a B. A. candidate has profited by mixing with others. Moreover, is it not true that many students who are in attendance might as well be in the Sandwich Islands as in Toronto, seeing that they never mingle with their fellows? Still further, I would ask, are the associations of some of the sets of students—such as the secret society of University College—of a character to liberalize the brethren?

Yours truly, M. A.

[We fully recognize the difficulty stated in the first sentence. But we maintain that the very excellence and essence of all true education is of such a nature that it cannot be accurately tested by examinations. No University would admit that the mere ability to answer the questions of its examiners is a sufficient qualification for a degree. Degrees are granted on the supposition that in acquiring the knowledge brought out by examinations the candidate also received the mental training which is education.—EDITOR.]

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE TEMPERANCE LEAGUE vs. THE "WEEK."

To the Editor of THE 'VARSITY.

SIR,—The attitude of the *Week* to the Temperance question is well known. It has made its mind up that the moderate use of wine and beer is not only not a cause of harm to the human race, but a decided advantage. In order to strengthen this position it is very fond of saying that in the wine-drinking and beer-drinking countries drunkenness is unknown. For example, in its issue of Feb. 19th, we find the following: "The notion that the moderate use of light wines or beer must lead to excess, or to the use of stronger liquors, is confuted by the experience of tens of millions in the wine-growing countries, and in the countries where wholesome beer is the regular drink. When a man asserts that drunkenness is prevalent in the wine-growing countries he only shows that he can never have seen them."

I would ask the *Week* if it reckons England among the beer-drinking countries. It has always been considered one of them, and there can be no doubt that drunkenness is very prevalent there. Is France a wine-drinking country? Drunkenness is sufficiently prevalent there, to cause the people to organize societies such as the *Association Française contre l'abus des Boissons Alcooliques*, to cause the *Académie de Médecine* to publish an *Avis sur les dangers qu'entraîne l'abus des Boissons Alcooliques* and to cause the *Chambre des Députés* on the third of February, 1873, to pass a law *contre l'ivresse publique*. And with regard to Germany, which is both a wine-drinking and a beer-drinking country, the following news item from the daily press of the 21st inst. is much more conclusive than the continual dogmatism of the *Week* on the question:

"Something more than a year ago there was formed in the city of Kassel a German society to suppress the abuse of intoxicating liquors. The distinguished Prof. Nasse, of Bonn, was made its President, and Dr. Lammers, a well-known humanitarian, of Bremen, who had already written valuable treatises on the evils of the liquor traffic, became actively identified with it. Already branch societies have been formed in many places, and it is hoped that the whole German Empire will, before long, recognize the importance