

COMMUNICATIONS.

To the Editor of the Journal:

DEAR SIR,—Two communications have appeared in late issues of the JOURNAL in which our present classical course has been made the subject of criticism. The writers agree in thinking that there is a serious defect in the course as it now stands, but differ as to the remedy required. Now, sir, apart from the fact that such vague and indefinite criticism is calculated to give those of your readers who are unacquainted with the facts, a false impression regarding one of the most interesting honor courses in our curriculum, I wish to be allowed to examine briefly some of the statements contained in those articles. The first critic, "W.L.G.," states that the course comprises too much work to be accomplished in two years and not enough to occupy three. *Haud inexpertus loquitur*. It is impossible for Queen's to go back, *ergo* more work must be added. Surely, sir, the experience whereof the writer boasts has been acquired in the remote past. Surely he is ignorant of the fact that one of last year's graduates, a man supposed to be possessed of average ability and an honor matriculant, spent five years on this course. I think that not only most of the students who of late years have taken this course, but the professors themselves will bear me out in saying that "W.L.G.'s" remarks are misleading. The Honor Classics course is *now* virtually a three years' course. For the ordinary pass matriculant five years are required in order to get up the work in a satisfactory manner and the instances are very rare in which an honor matriculant has passed his exams in less than four years' time. I quite agree with the writer that Queen's must on no account be suffered to fall from her high estate but do not think that an increase of work is required if she is to maintain her position.

"W.L.G.'s" suggestion that the "first year honors" examination be made compulsory is, I think, a good one, though I cannot agree with "W.W.K." in thinking that this examination should be also final as far as the work covered during the year is concerned. One of the best features of a classical course is the fact that it accustoms men to habits of application and thoroughness in their work. If the work were divided into instalments, and examinations were held at the end of each year, it would put a premium on the "cramming" which "W.W.K." so deplors. Many a man could successfully complete his course under this system who would be quite unequal to the long and patient drill whereby a man now fits himself for the crowning "final."

The additional work recommended by "W.W.K." is, I think, unnecessary. Methods of criticism are

taught in other classes of the M. A. course; history of the languages may be learned from the books recommended for reference, and lectures on the development of the drama are already given in connection with the works of the different tragedians. With this, until we have acquired a fair working knowledge of the languages, let us be content.

In short, Mr. Editor, while the standard of matriculation in classics remains as at present I am opposed to the laying of any additional burden upon the already heavily-laden classical student. But if, to save Queen's from losing her rank among the educational institutions of the country, more work must be done, I would suggest that the student employ his superabundant leisure in the acquirement of greater facility and accuracy in his Latin and Greek prose composition rather than in any increase of reading.

CLASSICS.

To the Editor of the Journal:

DEAR SIR,—It was with feelings of pleasure that I heard the announcement last Saturday that an open meeting of the A.M.S. would be held on Feb. 16th, at which a programme would be offered. Now, sir, it seems to me that, while everyone is being eagerly canvassed to join this society or that club, our old Alma Mater is being left out in the cold. Criticisms enough and to spare have been showered upon her, but apparently with a result the opposite of that intended. The three meetings of this year have been unmistakably dull; only two or three business items of importance have been discussed, and no entertainment of any kind provided. Twice in succession has the programme promised by the class of '97 been postponed, and not the faintest whisper of the resurrection of the mock parliament has been heard, while the suppression of the movement towards inter-year debates has discouraged those who would like to see more profitable meetings. *Facilis descensus Averno*. When once the students lose interest in the society, nothing but this can be expected. Where, then, does the fault lie? I believe with both the members and the executive of the society, and it is only idle talk for one to be continually throwing the blame on the other. These are plain and admitted facts, but their coloring would soon be changed if the executive would bestir themselves and if the students would respond with attendance and assistance. The A.M.S. is not the place for learned expositions, but it should occasionally provide an evening's entertainment for the hard worked students and encourage their association with each other. That it will do so in the future more than it has done in the past is the hope of

ALUMNUS.