

tional tints of a Turner, from cricket prospects to those two momentous questions of life: "What is all this worth?" and "What will we do with it?" Thereby the desired general mental atmosphere is kept wholesome by constant circulation.

To one in a reminiscent mood, there come up many memories of those hotch-potched discussions in his days. The gatherings were not of the George Eliot "College Breakfast Party" order. They were modeled more after King Frederick William's Tobacco Parliament. The talk went on in an atmosphere of smoke as evanescent as the Spanish castles that were builded and described, yet as dense as the attempted expositions of some metaphysical point. Theme followed theme with a rapidity and abruptness that would have driven the "New Republic" experimenters with a conversational menu to absolute despair. Definite subject there rarely was, and even then it had the generous dimensions of a family umbrella, under which could be huddled the irregular notions—ideas would have required too much elbow room—which managed to fit in, one with another, through their deformity. Crude conceptions, extravagant ideals, defective logic, malaprop illustrations, absurd comparisons—all were there. But it was all delightful. What if the talkers got beyond their depth? They enjoyed sprawling out. What if some were dogmatic and self-opinionated? It only found them firm of conviction, and free from the curse of mental instability. What if some became animated to the very pale of the boisterous? It only showed them full of life and earnestness. Withal they gathered many an idea, slag-burdened no doubt, but to be remoulded by the processes of more mature thought, and they had the fact impressed upon them that $x + y = q$ only in a relative and conventional sense.

It was a time for forming character and this constant contact did its work. Rough edges were rubbed off by attrition and lacks supplied by contributions. The phases of bent and disposition on which the work could be done were manifold. The depth and brilliancy of George Eliot's proxy arguments were wanting in those talks, but all her personages could have been supplied save "the polished priest, a tolerant listener"—and many more besides. Every generation of collegians supplies its quota of them. It is easy now to recall an "Osric, spinner of fine sentences," who perhaps with wisdom then unappreciated seldom ventured further than to skim over the surface of a subject, and whose chief desire was that the receding of the gentle ripples stirred should be full of grace. To this he joined some inclination towards the supercilious and an intermittent fondness for the sneer. Thus far he was an Osric, but his quiet smile at bursts of enthusiasm and attempted arguments impressed his fellows with the idea that the light treatment of their theme was but a gloss over depths of thought beyond them. And perhaps they were right. There was "Laertes, ardent, rash, and radical," resistlessly carried away by sentiment, with heart on

sleeve, showing approval or disapproval in every feature, nervously impatient to break in, not a little dogmatic too, and with a feminine predilection for the last word. "Discursive Rosencrantz" had many a double and even "grave Guildenstern," treating himself alone to his smiles, and conversing mainly with his brier-root was to be seen. There was the loud spoken arguer, plainly uncertain as to his own convictions, but with the never neglected principle of ranging himself on the contrary side; fond of bizarre theories, anxious to startle, continually getting beyond his depth, and calling dogmatism to his aid to haul him out. There was the verbal cynic with kindest heart, who launched bitter sarcasms, which regret pursued more closely than ever *atra cura* ventured to crowd. There was the soft-voiced slave to æsthetic longings, and among the rest one who seemed then to have come to

—learn 'tis best in all things to hold living very lightly,

—one once best described in the classic columns of *Episkopon* as "sitting in his chair, looking around." But nearly all in that elastic stage, when the latest impression is apt to force out all previous dents, partook largely of the characteristics of host Hamlet:

Questioning all things, yet half convinced,
Credulity were better; held inert
'Twixt fascinations of all opposites,
And half suspecting that the mightiest soul
(Perhaps his own?) was union of extremes,
Having no choice but choice of everything.

They are seen in memory now. Lounging about on chairs and sofas, and not spurning the floor, when a "Standing Room Only" sign would be appropriate, in every form of apparel from the sedate robe and mortar board of the statutes to the jaunty smoking jacket and cap, "they take their ease, smoke their pipes and sing their glees," and interrupted only by the songs, amid the puff, puff of the pipes, and the clank of the pewters, the flow of talk goes on. And were all these winter night gatherings vain? Decidedly not. Osric still spins fine sentences, now before judge and jury, but with an earnestness and directness not then known to him. Laertes is still ardent and sentimental, but mingling more of patient consideration for the whims of others in his views. The arguer still engages in controversy, but with more caution and less straining after effect. Perhaps the æsthete is still æsthetic, and the lover of still-life still appreciative of a cosy arm-chair, but more earnestness of purpose has been instilled into them. How many of these changes took their start in social College life?

Glorious College Talks! Inspirers of many a lofty aspiration and prompters of many an earnest self-study! They will be fresh in mind when the difference between second aorists and cosines will be deemed indifferent: they will be dear to the heart when Xenophon can be quoted as the author of the *Æneid* without calling out a protest. Those to whom they are in the past can, in a measure, appreciate the impassioned cry of the poet