

college custom, that future hazings, supposing them to take place at all, must be quite different in the personnel of the tribunal, in the character of the proceedings, and in the reputed object of the ceremony. University College is in the somewhat singular position among the elder colleges, that the student body have no traditions (except, perhaps, hazing,) and no authoritative customs. . . . While the student body are in council, it may be fruitful for them to consider how best to excite an interest in college life, that may prove a source of continual strength to the University, besides interspersing some play with the sober exercises of the class-room."

In accordance with the views thus expressed, we further advocated the formation of a regular College Court, conducted openly and above board, and having a jurisdiction, by common consent of the students, over the doings of undergraduates in their student capacity. Such a Court, we thought and said, would serve as a compromise between extremists of both parties, and would go far towards preserving peace and good-will in the College. We much regret that the suggestion which we then made was not acted upon. We may be permitted to say that the action of the Non-Hazing Union in this respect was laudably inconsistent. Some of its more active members openly offered to accept such a compromise, though it should clash slightly with some of their expressed objections to the hazing system as a whole.

But now that the trouble which we then feared has actually occurred; now that the College has been disgraced by it in the eyes of the outside public—what shall be said of such a proposal? Briefly this: that it now rests with the advocates of hazing to do one of two things: first, to renounce hazing and all its works, in all forms, once and forever—and there are many who will be very sorry to be thus in at the death of an old (almost our only) college custom—or, secondly, to unite with non-hazing advocates of a general College Court in the attempt to form such a Court in such a fashion as to secure the withdrawal of the opposition at present offered by the Council.

With all due respect to the President's authority, we may say that we believe this matter would in the end have been well settled by the students themselves. However, the Council was, of course, bound to take some steps to vindicate its authority and the honour of the College; and if the students complain that its action seems somewhat arbitrary, they must lay the blame at the door of those who caused the senseless disturbance of December last.

But the Council's decree—prepared before the present scheme for a College Court was drawn up—was aimed not at such a proposition, we believe, but at the hazing as conducted in the past. That many extreme non-hazers can find nothing to object to in such a plan is the best guarantee the Council can have that the Court will be carried on with due regard to decency and order. To form the Literary Society into a College Court is, we think, contrary to its constitution, and out of the question. But this motion is otherwise well conceived and if adopted may solve the whole difficulty. We only regret that it was not made sooner. It is doubtful whether non-hazers will be ready to accept as a compromise now what was rejected when they offered it last fall. But we can see little to object to in the scheme, and think it worthy the consideration not alone of the student-body—hazers and non-hazers alike—but of the College Council as well.

#### PRIZES IN ENGLISH AND LATIN VERSE.

We understand that the prizes hitherto competed for in English and Latin verse are not to be awarded again. The prizes for French and German prose are also cancelled, but it is not of these that we wish more particularly to speak at present, although this measure too will be disapproved by many. When the intention was announced of abolishing the University Scholarships, we had not so much reason to protest against the innovation. Those who most warmly upheld the principle of money rewards for class merit, and who were most pronounced in opposition to the plan of total abolition, could

not fail to see some reasons supporting the course that the authorities took in the matter. And the most potent of all the reasons advanced was that the University was not possessed of the necessary funds. But in the present instance the paltry plea of poverty is of no avail, and the principles involved in a consideration of the Scholarship question are not applicable. The mere notice in the curriculum that such prizes were to be competed for, were they to remain forever unawarded, owing to the lack of response, or to the lack of merit in the responses, reveals motives of high intention and a worthy spirit of encouragement on the part of the authorities. But rather would we refer to the benefit resulting to competitors, for such there will always be if a fitting subject has been selected to allow of a powerful and artistic treatment. From a purely artistic point of view, practice in the construction of Greek and Latin verse, even where the imagination is not exercised, would result in a development of refinement and taste, and it is indisputable, whether from right motives or wrong, that the existence of prizes is a great spur to conscientious and careful effort. The withdrawal of the English Verse prize does not affect any course in particular, but is surely a matter for sorrow to that shy and retired band of uncrowned poets that do throng our halls, and who but need the consolation of a prize at the hands of the "Academie Canadienne" to assure themselves of immortality. It is too late to protest with effect against some inevitable changes to which Time and Reason have reconciled us, but this last elimination will only be effected at the cost of the good-will of many, and resulting in a subtraction from the dignity of our University.

#### COMMUNICATIONS.

THE Editors are not responsible for the opinions of correspondents. No notice will be taken of unsigned contributions.

#### A PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY:—

DEAR SIRS,—The professorial chair that has been established in the University of Toronto in the department of English is to be filled shortly. The report has gone round that a strong effort is being made to obtain the position for a gentleman who has acquired no reputation either for his scientific knowledge of the language or for critical and creative ability in English literature.

It is asserted that a thorough training in Greek and Latin is a sufficient qualification for a professor in English. A more absurd claim could scarcely be made. The assertion has its origin mainly in the intellectual arrogance of men who have only a classical training. This presumption has done incalculable injury to the study of English. Men saturated with the principles of the synthetic classical languages have been trying for centuries to force on an analytic tongue the laws of dead and petrified Greek and Latin. To change the figure, they tried and keep on trying to put the new wine of living English into the old bottles of the classical tongues. And so our study of English grammar has been conducted in a thoroughly unscientific method, barren of any good results. The undue influence of the classics appears, too, in our literature in artificiality of structure and figures, in narrowness of outlook and in pomposity and verbal emptiness.

It was Aristotle, was it not? who said that we learn to play the harp by playing on the harp—not on the violin or banjo. One would think English should be learned by the study of English.

The time is critical. What is wanted is a man with a scientific knowledge of English, literary ability in English and the power of inspiring students with earnestness of effort and positive enthusiasm. There is one such man offering himself for the position and it is to be hoped that he will get it.

Yours,  
SIGMA.