

## THE FUTURE IS BETTER THAN THE PAST.

Not where long passed ages sleep,  
Seek we Eden's golden trees  
In the future folded deep  
Are its mystic harmonies.

All before us lies the way,  
Give the past unto the wind;  
All before us is the day,  
Night and darkness are behind.

Eden, with its angels bold,  
Love and flowers, and coolest sea,  
Is not ancient story told  
But a glowing prophecy.

ELIZA THAYER CLAPP.

## Editor's Table.

## AN ESSAY ON PHONETICS.\*

WE have received from Mr. M. L. Rouse, an English barrister at present resident in this city, a copy of his essay on the *Number and Nature of the Vowel Sounds*. In it the author gives a *resumé* of the systems of Helmholtz, Walker, Isaac Pitman, Webster, Nuttall, and other dictionary makers, and gives a table of the vowel sounds used in the English, German, French and Italian languages. From this table we find that the Italian possesses twelve simple vowels and one diphthong; French, fifteen simple vowels and three diphthongs; English, thirteen and five respectively; and German, the full sixteen and five, besides one triphthong.

Mr. Rouse states that the object of his essay is "to make a complete table for all the vowels and vowel compounds uttered by the different nations of the world." The result he has arrived at is given in the table we have referred to, but which is too extensive to be reproduced here. The author also draws attention to "the strange fact that many nations dwelling far apart and speaking tongues very unlike each other, possess certain interjections in common. Thus the English, the French, the German, the Hindoos, and the Japanese use *oh!* to express surprise, and *ah!* or *ach!* to betoken sorrow; the English, the French and the Japanese use *eh!* to enforce a question; and while the boys of England use *aw!* to show extreme wonder, the men of Japan have recourse to *arwee!* for the same purpose. Mr. Rouse regards this, not without an apparent show of reason, as "a remnant of a language that the peoples of the earth had in common before they were dispersed at the building of Babel, and which they were suffered to retain as evidence of their community of speech." Mr. Rouse makes a discovery which, if nothing else, is certainly a strange coincidence. He gives a list of the eight long simple vowels which he maintains occur in English, viz.: *oo* (boom), *oh* (mote), *aw* (dawn), *ah* (path), *u(r)* (burn), *eh* (age), *ii* and *ee* (keen). He then shows that "each of these long simple vowel sounds is used in English as an interjection with a distinctive meaning (albeit sometimes with the help of a guttural attached to it)." The list is as follows:—

<i>oogh!</i>	expresses	anger
<i>oh!</i>	"	surprise
<i>aw!</i>	"	wonder
<i>ah!</i>	"	sorrow
<i>urgh!</i>	"	disgust
<i>eh!</i>	"	inquiry
<i>ich!</i>	"	contempt
<i>eegh!</i>	"	pain

\*The *Number and Nature of the Vowel Sounds*: by Martin Luther Rouse of the English Bar. Toronto: Rowsell & Hutchison.

The essay is necessarily somewhat technical in its nature, and requires to be carefully read. We understand, however, that Mr. Rouse will lecture before the Modern Language Club, on "Music in Speech," at its next meeting, and those interested in this important study should take the opportunity of hearing the author expound his theory on this and kindred subjects.

## Communications.

## AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE Y. M. C. A.

To the Editor of THE VARSITY:

SIR,—There are few, I venture to think, who will be so fanatical as to deny that certain amusements would be harmless in themselves were it not for their associations and surroundings. The two amusements which have been especially placed under the ban are card-playing and billiards. Now, neither of these would be tabooed were it not that the only public places in which a taste for either can be gratified are such places as should be avoided by respectable people; places in which special temptations for gambling and drinking are afforded. But much of the force of such objections would be neutralized if opportunities for the playing of either of these games were given in which neither of the two evils complained of were tolerated; and laws against their infringement framed and rigidly enforced. Now, what more practical proof of a liberal-minded desire to do a most positive good, and to redeem two most scientific and fascinating forms of amusement from the ban under which they have so long and so unjustly been placed, could the Y. M. C. A. authorities have than to allow the use of a room in their new building—and I take it they have one or two to spare—where there games could be indulged in by undergraduates without the attendant evils which ruin and dedauch so many? Of course it is understood that those wishing to play these games provide the requisites and hire the room at a low rental. I may add, by way of precedent, that in a Roman Catholic College in the United States there is a flourishing billiard association, of which a reverend father is President. I write this in good faith and seriously, hoping for a reply. For the present I will sign myself,

CUE.

## AMATEUR THEATRICALS.

To the Editor of THE VARSITY:

SIR,—Most of us (in the opinion of a late writer), at one time or another in our lives, have felt the charm of an actor's life, as we were free to fancy it, well-nigh irresistible. One may spend a very pleasant half-hour imagining one's self a great actor,—for who would needlessly fancy himself a small one? I do not, however, wish to be understood as insinuating that it is by reveries such as these that the Modern Language Club has been led to the desire of acting a play. The idea, I feel sure, is one that will meet with great favour. A play might very well be produced at the Conversazione, in the mathematical lecture room. The cost of mounting it well on the stage would not be great, and it would be one of the most attractive entertainments of the evening. I understand that the Club has been considering the advisability of acting, in French, one of Molière's comedies. It seems to me that the members of the Club could not do better than choose an English comedy, since they seem to have a becoming diffidence of their ability to act plays or scenes from Shakespeare. I would suggest "She Stoops to Conquer." There is, however, a wider field for choice. Our dramatic literature—if we Americans may be permitted to speak of it so—is our greatest literature. "It is the thing we have done best."

AN OUTSIDER.