

THE VARSITY

A Weekly Journal of Literature, University Thought and Events.

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No. 12.

WONDERLAND.

There are songs in the rivulet,
Voices unknown,
Murmuring melody
To me—*alone* ;

There are hymns in the mountain-pines
Swept by the breeze
That bloweth ever, from
Storm-tossed seas ;

There are spirits invisible
Thronging the air,
Whispering mystery
Everywhere.

And they tell of a wonderland
Near, yet so far,
Where the strange and the beautiful
Infinite are ;

They tell of a wonderland,
Bright and so fair,
That knows not our restlessness,
Knows not despair ;

Knows none unfortunate,
Knows none impure ;
Knows but a loveliness
That doth endure.

There is no weariness,
Peace dwelleth there,
Joy in that wonderland,
Strange and so fair.

ALU.

SOUVENIRS.

We are what we are independently of ourselves. We were not consulted as to whether we wished to be born in the old log house which lay sheltered by the pine-crowned hill. We did not choose that we should be fed on "cup" potatoes (why are there no more "cups"?) and good fat bacon, but we were, and never shall we eat oysters or lobsters with such relish as fresh pork. It is in our opinion a sort of ambrosia.

In the summer-time we ran barefooted among the berry bushes and spoiled our taste for oranges, pine-apples, and bananas by and feasting on the raspberry and wild gooseberry. Even the diamond-shaped, sharp-tasting bug, which it was often our lot to encounter, has been invested by us with a sort of venerable halo.

How sweet, too, was the smell of the fresh-turned earth! No bouquet compares with it. Or the smell of the various woods as the chips fell from the chopper's axe! What is there in the city to be compared with it! In the city everything is spoiled, every sweet-smelling thing becomes malodorous. What a delightful perfume rises from the cedar tree when cut

in its native swamp, and what a pest it is after it has been for a while in the pavement of Toronto's streets!

Then, too, the books we read or heard read, how much better they seem to us than all else we have read since then. The jokes in the old-time Ayer's Almanac, which it was our particular joy to receive from the village druggist, early in December, are the very ones we use still to "point a moral, or adorn a tale;" none like them have been invented since. Occasionally we meet one of them now in print, and our thoughts go back with lightning speed to the old log-house, and the hearth with its maple back-log, by whose light we spelled out the jokes to a delighted household. Ah! that was gladness and appreciation of literary effort.

Then, there was another book, written by a certain tinker. Oh! it was an interesting book! We have read books since, full of wonderful adventures, but never have we felt such a thrill as in reading the account of the escape of Christian and his companion from the Castle of old Giant Despair. It was no allegory to us. It was solid fact. We thought not of its theological import, and only read the notes at the foot of the page, by that pious man Scott, as a sort of duty, when we were allowed the privilege of reading the book on Sundays. For it was not—strictly speaking—a Sunday book. It was only when we had well learned the six verses of the Psalm allotted for the day, and the four questions of the Shorter Catechism—with the proof-texts annexed thereto—that we were permitted to read about Doubting Castle and the Slough of Despond. But if we could not read about these there was another book which had even more wonderful stories in it and which we were not prevented from reading. How interesting it was to read about the boy whose father had made for him a tartan kilt, whose wicked brothers put him in a hole and sold him to the strange merchants passing by, but who afterwards became the chief man of a mighty kingdom. What a story was that of the strong man whose eyes were put out by the friends of his graceless wife! Can any piece of literature equal it in power! Our hearts thrill every time we read how he bowed himself and in his mighty strength pulled the house down on himself and his tormentors. Surely he was avenged for his two eyes. Or that other story of the bald-headed prophet and his master. How lonesome we felt as we came back with him after having seen his master carried away in the chariot of fire. Poor old soul, how often we wept with him and for him. The possession of the mantle and of the double portion of his master's spirit was no compensation.

Of a truth we did not read much of the Lamentations of Jeremiah nor of the Epistle to the Romans. If they had beauties we passed them by. We were not studying theology, but we did not say much about what we were studying for fear that selections might have been made which would be tedious. We preferred it to be understood that we were deeply serious, and if we felt at any time a pricking of conscience at practising deceit we felt that it was fully atoned for by the learning of the Psalms of David in metre—in that limping Scotch version—and of the Shorter Catechism, and on further reflection we think we were right.

So were we formed. We could not help it,—nobody could, so it appears. Our tastes may be low, our estimate of books perverted, and yet, feeling all this, we would not have it otherwise. We don't wish to lose a liking for pork and potatoes, we don't wish even to outgrow our love for the Bedford tinker or to cease to be interested in the story of Samson the mighty.

S.

EXTRACTS FROM AN ESSAY ON THOREAU.

DELIVERED AT THE LITERARY SOCIETY.

(Continued).

The examination of Thoreau's poetic faculty is forced upon us by the constant recurrence of verses interspersed with his prose writings, and illustrating some pregnant point in them. We have seen that neither Stedman nor Richardson in their American critical works bestow a separate study upon him as a poet, and only incidentally refer to him, without conveying an idea of his rhyming powers, or in his case the capacity of making two words rhyme, or three if necessary. The bulk of his poetry is so small, and the thought matter so restricted, that only the warmest sympathetic qualities and the most facile command of rhythm could redeem it from indifference, and these requisites no search would detect. The conciseness that we claimed as a merit for his prose is continued into his verse, and makes his figurative speech most poverty-stricken. Scant thought scantily poetified, though in a rugged flint-like manner, never caught many sparks from fame, and Thoreau's muse must forever be barren of high result as inciting to action, or even to meditative repose.

One would imagine that his verse would reflect some picturesque lights from the Nature that so often kindled his prose into beauty; but searching we only find some scattered sprays of flowers and some chaste descriptions (some of them perhaps too abrupt) of atmospheric effects. The poems *Mist, Haze, and Smoke* are most beautiful fragments, and of the latter he it said, as Swinburne, conversing with Stedman, somewhat extravagantly remarked of four lines of Landor, "It is the supreme gem in all his crown of song." Indeed, in these few lines we find at last the sky-like purity that Page claims for his verse—united to a refinement of language, and a smoothing of the jagged edges, which he does not trouble himself with doing elsewhere. The poem is one dainty little metaphor to the end, and in this it resembles some of his longer and more laboured work.

Thoreau tells us that he did not get much of himself into his "Yankee in Canada," and most assuredly he does not get much of us into his verses. His theory of diction maintained that if one has anything to say it drops from him as a stone to the ground. He has told us that he likes to hear hard blows behind the periods, and to see callused palms wield the pen and stamp the sentence with sincerity. All this is surely admissible, and in part important as preparation to an honest poem, if the blows and labourer's breath be not carried too far, and we hear the panting and sound of hammers that reared the structure.

We think that his poetry has been abused by the indulgence of critics. The vital portion of the man would not be destroyed by the elimination of all the poetry he ever wrote. But it does nevertheless subserve an important function, and as aptly appears throughout the prose, as do the numerous quotations that he inserts to illustrate some theory he is discussing.

Thoreau did not use what is generally termed plot in any of his books. There is no doubt that if he had introduced something of the sort he would now be more widely read and appreciated. In three of his narrative writings, "*Walden*," the "*Week*" and "*Maine Woods*," the scenery through which he moved seemed to consort most admirably with his genius, for the written products of these expeditions do not flag in interest for a moment. All that he observed was so delightfully and accurately recorded, that, in his own words, it is as if a green bough were laid across the page when we read. In "*Walden*," from the vantage-ground of voluntary poverty, he was able to look into the world near to which he lived, and draw from it food for ridicule or reflection. But 'tis strange that his food for reflection is often our food for ridicule, and many things that he deems absurd because he never practised them, we consider necessary and expedient because our fathers thought them so before us, and we had never dreamt of the contingency of their non-existence as regards ourselves. Who, for instance, can serenely read this serious statement?

"When formerly I was looking about to see what I would do for a living, some sad experience in conforming to the wishes of friends being fresh in my mind to tax my ingenuity, I thought often and seriously of picking huckleberries."

We can make no more claim for him in parts of his work than that he was a conscientious observer at times inspired. But even when his imagination was thus enkindled, overhanging and belittling all, is the inspiration of restraint. He lived too much in two distinct elements that have for limits the antitheses of each other. Erase the poet and supply the omission with a better directed insight, and a mighty scientist appears. Expunge and annihilate that inordinate love for detail, and there arises from the transformed substance one that is a poet in truth. But sadly enough the imagination of the one was overtaken and curtailed by the tardiness of the other; the result is Thoreau, and so we must enjoy him.

Thoreau's consideration of many aspects of friendship remain to be discussed. To this subject he devoted his best ethical writing, and deals with it most thoroughly in his chapter "*Wednesday*," in the "*Week*." Stevenson has said that nobody has spoken in a purer strain of the friendly relations.

His sojourn at Walden gave him experience of the kind most congenial to him. But a life with so few cares and necessities, far removed from the decay and misery of the helpless poor of towns, rendered him almost insensible to their misery, and he attributed all their difficulties to an unnecessary multiplication of necessities. He, a bachelor, overlooked the increase of these requirements due to a multiplication of the species in one family, and constantly spoke from his own experience. We must admit that while his political ethics were unimpaired, his social sympathies were distorted by the narrowness of his experience. Stevenson, comparing him with Whitman, notices the personal magnetism of the latter, exercised to the advantage of those with whom he associated. But Nature is not so barren of her highest results that she must mould them in imitation of the first successful man she made. The knowledge that there exist various men of different impulse, who shall between them use Life without stint for all the experience it contains for them, adds a sense of relish and fulness to existence. If Thoreau had educated himself into retirement and nature I should not have demurred, knowing that others are reversing the process by educating themselves into society. But Thoreau was above all reproach sincere, and his life should not be harshly viewed, for he knew and fulfilled the demands within him.

Genius most inspires us to aspiration when it banishes the vulgar ideas that attach themselves to all things, and restores to life the glory of its spiritual significance. An intense earnestness we demand, and enough revelation of self in the author to assure us that he knows sorrow and joy, himself having suffered them. The man of broadest and deepest sympathy is the most universal, and his mission is infinitely wide, and of long duration. No one man has ever spoken for humanity nor ever will, lacking the experience of millions. As the impersonal interpreter of nature, Thoreau expresses universal sympathies. But where subjective traces reveal to us the man himself, and where the human cry is heard mingling with nature's more subdued emotion, he appeals more directly to those of like temperament, but the average of his influence is maintained by his weaker appeal to others. He is too local to be widely known, for his observation was chiefly directed to the aspects of the Concord country and his thoughts were tinged with the transcendental spirit of the town or mystified by the Eastern philosophy that lined the Concord shelves.

PELHAM EDGAR.

"LYRIC BILL" TELFORD.*

A REVIEW.

When, in a late number of *THE VARSITY*, a writer for the Round Table undertook to indicate some of the reasons why a native literature has not yet been fostered to maturity in Canada, he ventured further to express the conviction that at some (probably) far distant day, there would appear an enthusiast who would "forget himself in his art,"—would prostrate himself with fervent frenzy before the shrine of poetry, pouring forth his soul in burning words of passionate self-devotion. Little did the writer then know how near was the fulfilment

* The Poems of William Telford, Smith, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada; Bard of Peterborough St. Andrew's Society. (Peterborough: J. R. Stratton.)

of his prophecy: even while he penned those words William Telford—"Lyric Bill," as he loves to call himself—was peddling his poems about the country at the low price of One Dollar per volume!

To those to whom a perverse fate has denied the pleasure of the acquaintance of Mr. Telford or his poems, a brief sketch of our new-crowned king of bards may be acceptable. For details as to our subject's antecedents we are indebted to the biographical sketch of the author "contributed by an admirer" to the volume now before us, and to an able poem entitled "A Poor Scholar; or, My own Difficulties," in which the "pote" (so Mr. Telford pronounces the word) outlines his own past life. We quote:

"Auld Scotia, no doubt, as my birth-place I claim,
In the parish of Eccles, in Leitholm by name;
In 1828, the first month and sixth day
When I gave the first squawk, so my mother did say."

We know little of the poet's after life until he reached the age of ten years; the exact dates at which he encountered the dental and other dangers peculiar to youth must be left for the researches of future biographers to discover. That he went to school we know; as often happens with men of genius, his inborn gifts were not observed; much less appreciated. "The teacher, he says, "called me a thick-headed loon." At ten, however, his "Admirer" tells us, the poet was obliged "to join his brother at work, digging drains in winter and working in a brick and tile yard in summer. But the severe labour William was forced to perform did not crush out his inspirations for mental improvement. He rose superior to his prosaic environments, and the words of Gray, applied to genius, extinguished in undevelopment, could not be applied to him:

Chill penury repressed their noble rage
And froze the genial current of the soul.

He triumphed over conditions which would have brought discouragement or plodding content with ignorance to a less aspiring soul." He had in him, indeed, that which would not down:

"Just then in my head I felt something begin,
Neither teacher nor learning could ever put in;
The young poetic feeling began to diffuse,
Or, as some people call it, the gift of the muse."

But his obstacles were many; his opportunities few. One resource he had—books! And when we read the list of those from which he sipped delight in his young days we cannot wonder at the rich humour which runs through all the poems of his maturer age. "In prose," says the Admirer, "the books to which he had access were such works as Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress'; Baxter's 'Saints' Rest'; 'Man's Fourfold Estate'; 'Josephus' History'; Harvey's 'Meditations'; 'The Afflicted Man's Companion'; and such works."

It is impossible to give in the brief compass of this review a fuller account of the poet's history. We would only add that he has long been troubled with an affection of the eyes, which for a time at least made him almost wholly blind. He came to Toronto for treatment, and his sight was restored. It is with warm acquiescence that we read his poetical epistle to his doctor, wherein he thanks him for the gift of a pair of spectacles; hopes they may enable him to resume writing, and adds:

"If they do, sir, I'll thank you, sir,
With all gratitude I've got;
It would be sad, sir, and too bad, sir,
For my muse to flow unwrote."

Leaving, now, the consideration of our poet's life-history and the progress of his mental and æsthetic development, let us turn to survey the works themselves. His productions are published in a large quarto volume of 156 pages, double-columned and closely printed; handsomely and appropriately bound in green. The subjects chosen are many and varied, covering a wide range of thought, and exhibiting in a marked manner the versatility of Mr. Telford's muse. From "A View of the Name of God on the Scenes around us" to "A View of the Destruction made by the Grasshoppers," is a far cry, yet the poet in dealing with both themes displays equal happiness of treatment and facility of poetic and rythmical expression. In fact we may state at the outset that no theme is too majestic; none too trifling for "Lyric Bill." His sympathy is wide; his eye far-seeing; his judgment impartial.

We regret that we are unable to convey to our readers an idea of the real value of these writings. Our advice to all lovers of true poetry is, Buy and read the book itself. We shall only attempt, in the remainder of this article, to cull a few of the choicest flowers from this truly luxuriant garden of poesy.

Many poets have endeavoured to convey in rime the charms of "Spring." Even so trite a subject does not appal Mr. Telford; and we must concede that his treatment of it is markedly original. The spring of which he writes followed a very long, hard winter:

"But stay, smiling Spring! O, don't fly with affright,
I know those poor pigs are a pitiful sight;
They are thin as a rail, and their weakness intense,
When they stand up to squeal they must lean on the fence."

But Mr. Telford's muse is not always gently pastoral. His spirit shows itself at times truly military. Patriotism is ingrained in his very nature. Witness his "Short Sketch of the Rebellion in the North-West," from which we quote a few specimen couplets:

"Brave volunteers, your honour you maintained,
Fought your first battle and the victory gained.
Our young Dominion is and ought to be
Proud of such true and valiant sons as thee!
Onward they march through water and tough mud,
They powder smelled, now thirst for rebels' blood;
In joke and mirth their glittering bayonets feel,
Hoping ere long to thrust them into Riel."

The following, further on, is quite Homeric:

"The pits are reached where crouching rebels kneel;
Quick through their bodies darts the glittering steel."

And this but caps the climax:

"'Twas nobly done, boys, on your arms now rest,
You crushed rebellion in our fair North-West,
You showed those half-breeds you still are and was
Able and ready to maintain our laws!"

In another poem his patriotism takes another turn. He evidently regards the marriage of Louise to Lorne as a personal affront to himself:

"Fourth daughter of England's pattern sire,
Fair child of that mother we love and admire,
Has that Highlander gained both your heart and your hand
And borne you off from your palace so grand?"

But for descriptive force and tragic interest "The Dummer Murder" is really sublime. We regret that we have space for only one stanza of this powerful "pome."

"O, what is man when all that's good gives way,
Worse than a wild beast prowling for its prey;
The little boy, perhaps a father's pride—
The monster cut his throat from side to side!"

We must sorrowfully omit reference to that exquisite piece, "The Poet's First Encounter with Potato Bugs" and to the classic "Lines on the Re-opening of A. P. Morgan's Hotel." We regret to find that even Mr. Telford is not free from the envious attacks of scoffing critics. He explains their hatred:

"Their reason is just why—
My lines all void of grammar is;
No mark of classic hammer is;
Illiterate—I must die!"

We have room only for one or two more specimens of Mr. Telford's writings. The first is from a poem, "The Unexpected Death of a Neighbour":

"In perfect health he left us here,
To Port Hope took his way
In hopes to reach another sphere—
The State of Iowa."

The other is from one called "Thoughts" on a similar subject:

"Ah, how mysterious are the ways of God,
Our friend had scarcely journeyed half his road,
Some heavenly whisper mortals cannot trace
Said stop at Selwyn—that's your dying place."

And now we must close. We have only to say that these "Poems" are at once the most pathetic and the most deliciously humorous collection that has ever graced the Sanctum table. We congratulate the author, his publisher, and the Canadian public; and we heartily welcome Mr. Telford's great work as a "distinct addition to Canadian literature."

THE VARSITY.

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"PRESIDENT WILSON AND UNIVERSITY CHAIRS."

The man who seeks to achieve distinction as a correspondent of the daily press must possess a double qualification: he must know what to write and when to write it. We incline to the belief that that gallant defender of the rights (or privileges) of Toronto graduates who veils his modest merit beneath the disguise "Torontonensis" has displayed an equal neglect of each of these important considerations.

The appointment to the Chair of English has been made. No change is possible,—even were it desirable. Hence "Torontonensis" can have had no motive for attacking as he did the Governments of the Province and of the University but that of revenge for real or fancied slights. The strong language of his letter—applied to a man whose reputation is at least above the reach of pseudonymous scribblers—is ample evidence of the perturbed state of his own mind.

We are not, we hope, transgressing the bounds of propriety when we frankly declare that the man who has been selected for this post is not the man whose appointment we should ourselves have preferred; before the choice was made, indeed, we strongly urged the claims of another. But neither did we favour the selection of any of the men whom, at so late a date, "Torontonensis" so eagerly and so ill-advisedly champions. And, examining now the testimonials of the successful applicant, we are forced to repeat (what we have already declared) that the authorities have in our opinion made an excellent choice.

The sectionalism shown in the letter deserves only the severest censure. When the appointment was yet to be made, the cry was, "Canada for the Canadians," and in a modified sense,—a sense in which every right thinking Canadian would, we think, concur in it,—we joined in the cry. A Canadian has, indeed, been chosen; and what now? Now we have another whine: Toronto University for Toronto University! Sectionalism can no further go. While we admit that, *other things being equal*, Toronto graduates should get the preference in such cases, we must at the same time insist on the principle, Get the best—where, it matters not. And, leaving Dr. Wilson to destroy "Torontonensis" argument, as regards other cases, with his formidable array of facts, we would earnestly invite the *Mai's* correspondent to favour a public which waits to be indignant with the specific grounds on which his present charge is based.

When will men—graduates and undergraduates—learn discretion in these matters? Is it not plain what must be the effect of such an impression as "Torontonensis" endeavours to create? His letter—which, by the way, is much less embarrassing to those he attacks than to those he champions—is an unmanly attack, not on President Wilson alone, but on the University as a whole. For every attempt to injure the reputation of her President; every insinuation of favouritism in her appointments, and, by implication, of the choice of inferior men; every attempt to create dissension among her graduates is a covert and, we repeat, a baseless and cowardly attack on our *Alma Mater*.

PUBLIC LECTURES.

In another column a correspondent calls attention to the public lectures which have lately been delivered at Trinity College, and laments that this example has not been followed

by the University of Toronto. Various disconnected and individual efforts to meet this demand have from time to time been made by members of the faculty, but, so far as we know, no organized movement in this direction has ever taken place. The advantages of such lectures to the public and the enthusiasm with which every tentative step has been met are pointed out by our correspondent; the benefits accruing to the University as a body from the popular interest and sympathy which would undoubtedly be awakened, are too obvious to require explanation; but we would wish to call attention to the important place such a scheme could be made to occupy in the training of the individual undergraduate.

It is a matter of serious concern with many of the leading men of the day, that our courses of instruction are branching off more and more into single subjects and single divisions of subjects, so that our young men are trained to be excellent scholars in their own departments, but receive no encouragement to take interest in the vast body of thought which lies outside this focus. Now, what could serve better to correct this tendency towards mental contraction, than attendance at lectures on the elementary and fundamental principles underlying those arts or sciences for the mastery of whose details they have not time? It may be said that some subjects do not admit of popular treatment. This statement is one we would most emphatically deny. We do not believe that it is possible to name a course of instruction in Toronto University which is not susceptible of being made interesting to an ordinarily intelligent audience. Let any scientist or scholar beware of stating that he is pursuing studies without bearing on public interest, for such a statement is tantamount to a confession that he has wandered from the high road of human thought and life into a blind alley, that he has lost all sense of perspective and is totally unable to perceive the relation which his subject bears to the intellectual life of the human race.

COLLEGE SOCIETIES.

In our last issue we printed a letter in which a correspondent regrets that our College Societies are all more or less in a state of decline, and assigns causes from which he considers this to result—increasing preponderance of "Plugs," and the deadening effect they have on attempts to resuscitate any old College institutions, he assigns as the reason of the lack of interest taken in the Literary Society and the subordinate societies. This week another correspondent combats this view, at least with regard to the Literary Society, and attributes the change not to a degeneracy in the student body—for we must reckon as degeneracy an increase in the number of "Plugs"—but to the changed circumstances of University life. This interpretation would seem the more plausible. Nothing is more common, more universal even, in the history of all institutions than the desuetude of old forms which have become unsuited to new modes of life. The Literary Society was founded some thirty-five years ago, when the College could boast hardly a hundred students, and when the specialization of studies was much less general than at present. It was natural and necessary that they should form one large body and include all students amongst their members, but as our correspondent points out, the Society has grown too large and the interest of its members too various for it to discharge its original functions efficiently. At present it has become principally a machine for giving *Conversazioni* and holding elections, and any change which will re-establish it on a new and active basis will be welcomed.

"THE CONVERSAZIONE."

This, the greatest social event of the College Year, passed off last night with great success, and will soon be nothing more than one of the pleasant memories of our College life. Amongst many agreeable features, perhaps the most prominent was the musical programme, which was excellent in almost every detail and reflects great credit alike on the management and on the performers. The singing of the Glee Club was quite up to the old time standard. The refreshment rooms, as is the case at almost every large entertainment, were some-

what uncomfortably crowded, but it seems impossible entirely to avoid this. The various exhibitions and demonstrations by the different societies and classes were well patronized.

The *Conversazione* is the only opportunity the students have of returning the hospitality of the people of Toronto, and last night's turn-out showed that their efforts are fully appreciated.

We would direct the attention of our readers to the College News columns, where are chronicled the most important and interesting features of the evening.

COMMUNICATIONS.

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

COLLEGE SOCIETIES.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—A correspondent in last week's VARSITY makes a statement which must, upon serious consideration, be recognized as in large measure true, viz.: that the college societies, instead of exhibiting any signs of increasing usefulness and success, are rather declining in efficiency and in literary character. Those acquainted with the working of the various societies will be slow to deny that the difficulty of obtaining good work seems to be increasing, that there is a continual strain necessary to keep up a respectable standard in the programmes presented. Yet while admitting this somewhat humiliating fact, it certainly is not due, as your correspondent says, to any increase in the number of "plugs" who come in from year to year. Are there not other causes to which the change may be ascribed? Let us confine our attention to the Literary and Scientific Society, and see if there are not forces at work which will in the end either bring about the extinction of this venerable body or necessitate a radical change in its organization. Any close observer of the undergraduate body cannot fail to discover that a remarkable change in the condition of affairs is going on. We are entering upon a new era in which the undergraduates will no longer occupy the position of students of a single school, and can no longer be united in a single literary society, but will become more diversified in interest and character as their numbers increase and as the working of the University is developed and enlarged. Year by year our numbers are growing, and already the theory that the Literary Society represents the whole undergraduate body has become a mere fiction. True, their names are all on its rolls and they may appear to vote once a year in the heat of an election, but the fact still remains that the large majority of them do not attend its regular meetings; nor are we justified in assuming that this majority is composed of the least able portion of the students. May not the truth of the matter be that the membership is too general, that admission is too cheap?

The probability of increased divergence, as years go on, in interests and feelings among the undergraduates has been referred to. Some may be inclined to ask—"What about the class societies? Will not these tend to prevent any such result?" On the contrary, by drawing each year closer together they will add but another force in the same direction. Our numbers are growing so rapidly that each year will soon be sufficient unto itself. There can be no doubt that better readings, better essays, and better debates, and more of them, in the aggregate, could be produced in four societies, each composed of students of the same year, than are to be heard now at the general Literary Society. But it may be said that these class societies are not supposed to be in any sense literary societies. But why not, to some extent? Meetings entirely social could still be held while other meetings could be partially devoted to literary work. Such meetings, in which all are on the same footing, are well acquainted with each other and feel no restraint, would without a doubt do more to develop the various talents of the members than is done now by the Literary Society. What, then, would become of this historic

body? It has already been suggested that one cause of its inefficiency may be that membership is too general and the admission too cheap. If literary meetings of the various years were held, the present general society might by some means be lifted to a higher level, its precincts might be made more sacred and admission to it might become the ambition of every member of the year societies as well as a recognition of abilities exhibited there. A student so honoured would feel, and would be, bound to sustain his reputation and justify his election, and then the Literary Society would perhaps be worthy of the college whose name it bears, which of late at any rate it can hardly claim to be.

Whether or not such a revolution in the organization of the Society be possible or expedient, about two things there can be no mistake: first, the class societies now organizing, being composed of a number of students large enough for any Literary Society, and drawing each year closer and closer together and thus separating the years by a line more and more marked, are going to produce such a change in undergraduate life as perhaps few realize; and, second, the effect of this change upon the general Literary Society, in its present state of organization at any rate, cannot possibly be beneficial.

MUTAMUR.

PUBLIC LECTURES.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—The authorities of Trinity College have during the last few years made a very pleasing variation in their routine work. From time to time lectures have been delivered, under their auspices, by eminent men from various parts of the Dominion, and from the United States, on subjects of a widely different kind.

These lectures, while perhaps originally intended for the direct benefit of the students of the University, have been by no means confined to this comparatively small audience: the public has been invited to attend and has shown itself most eager to take advantage of the opportunity. The large Convocation Hall has on every occasion been well filled, and when a very popular lecturer or a very popular subject has been announced, it has been difficult to procure seats for all those attending. And one feature of the audience deserves notice—the majority are ladies; and the fact of their turning out in such numbers shows how desirous they are of availing themselves of those opportunities—unfortunately too few—which are offered them in Toronto for intellectual enjoyment.

Some years ago, there were given here in the old Mechanics' Institute—the building now occupied by the Public Library—a course of lectures by some of the Professors of University College, Prof. Young, Sir D. Wilson, Prof. Cherriman, Prof. Goldwin Smith and others. These, I believe, were attended with great success, and it is really surprising to me that so long a time should have been allowed to elapse before this excellent precedent should have been followed.

Now, since Trinity College has taken the initiative in this matter, why should not the University of Toronto follow the example; it surely is no less desirous of cultivating the seeds of intellectual life amongst the public: and the success of these lectures seem to prove that this is a very easy means of doing so.

There are only two elements necessary to make such a plan successful, that subjects should be chosen that will be popular with an intelligent and fairly cultured audience, and that lecturers should be chosen who can handle these topics in a vigorous and lively style.

There has been one move in the right direction in University College, when Prof. Ashley's Inaugural Lecture was made open to the public, and on this occasion even the severe subject to be dealt with did not prevent Convocation Hall from being crowded to its doors.

I have great hopes that at no far distant date we may have a series of lectures given each year in the University of Toronto, to a Toronto audience.

Yours, &c.,

Feb. 11th, 1889.

MAC.

ROUND THE TABLE.

Ignatius Donnelly is superseded and Bacon is dethroned as the author of Shakspeare's works! Mr. Henry Gray, of Leicester Square, London, has published a thin 8vo. volume, price 50 cents, by Mr. Scott Surtees, claiming the authorship of Shakspeare's plays for Sir Anthony Sherley, whose name will be familiar to readers of Hakluyt and Purchas.

* * *

We have not before us the data upon which Mr. Surtees has based his claim in behalf of Sir Anthony Sherley, and therefore cannot pronounce upon its validity. But the revival of the agitation against the genuineness of Shakspeare's own claims leads us to make the suggestion that it will be absolutely necessary in future for literary men to deposit a sworn Affidavit of Authorship—under the Statute for the Suppression of Extra-Judicial and Voluntary Oaths—with the Registrar of Copyrights, or whoever the official is who attends to copyrighting, and attach a copy of the said Affidavit to each copy of their works. Then, and then only, will be saved the distraction of wondering till the end of time who really did write Boswell's Life of Johnson or Macaulay's Essays.

* * *

Mr. G. W. Smalley, the London correspondent of the New York *Tribune*, has a sensible word to say to the public and the publishers upon the recent craze for "*editions de luxe*." He very truly says of these monstrosities: "Such books are too bulky to read. They are not good specimens of bookmaking. Their price is enormous; their value in the future may be estimated by the fate of the *editions de luxe* of Thackeray, of Dickens, of Shakspeare, which are so many drugs in the market at less than half their cost price."

* * *

Booksellers, bookmakers—we do not here allude to sporting gentlemen—and publishers generally have no idea of the dignity and responsibility of their craft. Few, if any, know how to equal the printing and binding of books published between 1600 and 1700! Let any one go to the University, Library, and—if he can gain admission—let him examine a book bearing date, say about 1690-1720 or so, and one bearing date 1889, and there can be but one verdict—and that in favour of the centenarian! Elzevir is to be preferred to Mac-Millan every time!

* * *

One of Wordsworth's "occasional pieces" has been rescued from oblivion by Professor James E. Thorold Rogers. Although it has not been "certified" by Ignatius Donnelly, or Mr. Scott Surtees, we may accept it as genuine *pro tempore*. It appeared on or about April 14th, 14-16, 1726, in the *St. James' Evening Post*:

"On the Bursar of St. John's College, Oxford, cutting down a fine row of trees.

Indulgent Nature to each kind bestows
A secret instinct to discern its foes.
The goose, a silly bird, avoids the fox,
Lambs fly from wolves, and sailors steer from rocks;
A rogue the gallows as his fate forsees,
And bears a like antipathy to trees."

* * *

There are some interesting paragraphs—and indeed the whole book is a series of paragraphs—in *Lacon: or, Many Things in Few Words; addressed to Those who Think*. This peculiarly named book is by the Reverend C. C. Colton, A. M., and was first published in London, on 1st January, 1820. Here is an amusing one: "Dr. Darwin informs us, that the reason why the bosom of a beautiful woman is an object of such peculiar delight, arises from hence, that all our first pleasurable sensations of warmth, sustenance, and repose, are derived from this interesting source. This theory had a fair run, until some one ventured to reply: that all who were brought up by hand had derived their first *pleasurable sensations* from a very different source, and yet that not one of all these had ever been known to evince any very rapturous or amatory emotions at the sight of a *wooden spoon!*"

* * *

Here is a piece of really good advice given by the author above quoted: "In answering an opponent, arrange your ideas,

but not your words; consider in what points things that resemble, differ; and in what those things that differ, resemble; reply with wit to gravity, and with gravity to wit. Make a full concession to your adversary, and give him full credit for those arguments you know you can answer, and slur over those you feel you cannot. But above all, if he have the privilege of making his reply, take especial care that the strongest thing you have to urge is the last. He must immediately get up and say something, and if he be not previously prepared with an answer to your last argument, he will infallibly be bogged, for very few possess that very remarkable talent of Charles Fox, who could talk on one thing and at the same time think of another."

* * *

We had been talking of curious academical words, and the "oldest Residenter" was explaining that the meaning of the word "battel" was: "to stand indebted on the college books at Oxford, for provisions and drink from the buttery." "I suppose, then," said the Ingenious Man, "that the well-known phrase 'to battel the watch' means to treat the policeman!"

* * *

The Table-Poet, who, by the way, was not offered a position by any of the classes and consequently feels it peculiarly incumbent on him to assume a superior and patronizing tone, offers the following dictum to the recently-elected Class Poets: "It is popularly supposed that the artist, the master of form, is born with a faculty which enables him, without effort, to write flowing verse in the most complex metres, while the unfortunate poetaster struggles manfully to carry along a most ordinary rhyme over a metre which reads like a corduroy road. Plausible as it seems, this is not true. Both alike, artist as well as poetaster, encounter obstacles in handling their matter. The difference is this. While difficulty spurs the former to the creation of a brighter image, to the evolution of a more delicate fancy, the latter is content to seize the first platitude that seems likely to fit approximately into the tight place, without concerning himself as to the suitability of the idea or the musical quality of the language.

Therefore, O ye newly-laurelled bards, when you begin your class-poem, and have written (as you most surely will) the first line:

"I sing the glories of my class,"

have a care how you choose the second. Do not be misled, merely because the initial of the rhyming word happens to begin the alphabet, into continuing:

"But do not think that I'm an ass."

It certainly rhymes, and it may scan, but somehow it wouldn't suit. I don't know why; maybe it's the sentiment that's wrong. No. Shun the temptations which lie thickly sown about the commencement of the alphabet, avoid all allusions to "brass," yield not to the apparent appropriateness of the introduction of "gas," and, if you are the First-Year poet, think, think seriously before you make it read:

"I sing the glories of my class,

The Freshmen who are green as grass."

If nothing else deter you, remember that you should always, even in poetry, allude to your fellow-students as "gentlemen of the First Year."

Harden your hearts, ay, put wax in your ears as did Ulysses of old, when you approach the syren word "lass." Though it might sound as the echo of the early English dramatists to write:

"I sing the glories of my class,

Of youth and maid, of lad and lass."

still never forget that it would lead you dangerously near the quagmire of co-education wherein so many of our college authors lie swamped. I need not warn you against "mass;" any allusion to that would border upon religious topics, which are strictly forbidden by the Literary Society.

And so here we are at last at the very thing:

"I sing the glories of my class,

Of honour men as well as pass."

Simple, dignified, expressive, why didn't it strike us before? Having thus constructed the first couplet you need bother yourself very little about the rest, for you may be sure that when you are called upon to read it no one will listen further than this.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE NEWS.

ALL reports from Societies must reach us by noon on Thursday to insure insertion.

CONVERSAZIONE.

To convey an idea of the number of visitors at the *Conversazione* last evening would require something more than a mere statement in figures, though perhaps a figure of speech might do it. The fact, however, that, although Convocation Hall was crowded to overflowing during both parts of the Programme, the remainder of the building was well-filled in every nook and cranny will serve as a proof that the entertainment was not less popular than formerly.

We said that every part of the building was filled, but we should make an exception of the West Lecture room, where *Grip* perpetrated his time-honoured magic-lantern jokes. The public did not patronize this apartment very freely, presumably because they were already familiar with most of the cartoons which have appeared with slight variations ever since the first *Conversazione*.

The concerts were as usual the main attraction of the evening, the first one being especially good. The Glee Club sang with their old-time vigour, although their absence from the second Part seemed to show that their devotion to their art was not as single as in the olden times. Among the soloists Mrs. McKelcan was perhaps the most popular, her performances being encored in every instance.

The "K" Company Armoury at the head of the stairs by Convocation hall was decorated in a neat and orderly fashion which evinced the Bedel's soldierly instincts. The company, when they passed on into the Senate Chamber, were edified with microscopic views of such objects of public interest as mosquitos' heads and spiders' biting apparatus. One of the Reading-Rooms was monopolized by engravings of antediluvian wild beasts, *Plesiosauri*, *Ichyosani* and others, which looked sedately down on the passers-by; while in the other Reading-Room the Engineering students had erected a tent in the midst of a forest of spruce trees which awakened the primeval savage instincts in every bosom. As to the Library, the students looked at it, in the words of Scott, "as what they ne'er might see again." One undergraduate, in the First Year probably, was observed in a secluded corner poring over a volume, and when questioned said that he thought that it was a pity all those books should not be used when a chance did present itself.

In the Museum, a young lady wanted to know if the skeletons in the centre of the room were those of malefactors that their names should be suppressed.

The Physical students were in great force in their Laboratories at the west end of the building. In one room several demonstrators were engaged throughout the whole evening making all sorts of conceivable and inconceivable noises on instruments of every kind. In the adjoining apartment was displayed the electrical outfit of the College, the presiding genius of which was ever on the watch for hardy and venturesome guests on whom he might perpetrate electric shocks. To the less ambitious he exhibited milder experiments, such as the application of electricity as a motive power.

Perhaps the most interesting spectacle of all was the great body of guests, the immense number of people drawn together for a single night and with a single common interest and then dispersed again to the four winds of heaven.

LITERARY SOCIETY.

Literary Society, Friday, Feb. 8th. Commonly of a Friday evening our President is on the spot ready on time and ready in wit, keeping the place as he has been able to do for two years, and, the debate once closed, rising to speak to the listening se'nnightly audience. But to-night Mr. Cody sat vice-presiding, arbitrating on constitutional quirks, and holding under the levity that, give it once free hand, would choke the club's decent usefulness. No small task and not weakly performed—the task of keeping up a seemly decorum. To the general satisfaction did Mr. Cody preside, distinguishing between literary performers and auctioneers, sternly dismissing members from high places, *i. e.*, the feet of the garrulous one from a chair-back.

Commonly our minutes are undissemblingly passed and undergraduate, if not always undersized, feet pit-a-pat approval of the scribe's unswerving fairness. But to-night there arose in this uncustomary place Mr. Spence, and the severest of all censure he would cast, not on the scribe but on the meeting whereof the scribe had latest written. Yea, he would strike from out of ink-and-paper record the issue of their deliberations. Whether it was the tears or anger of the assembly that moved him, or an adverse ruling of the chair, or the better thought of making his work permanent, we cannot know, but we did see, and some of us with relief, the gentleman refrain from slashing the simple truthful minutes and notify, instead, an amendment to the constitution.

After the curator had sung a song that was none the less droll for not being in the bulletins as part of the programme, Mr. Munroe declaimed some Fourth of July bombast which, however well he declaimed it, cannot be considered proper humour, whether coming from Mr. Munroe "or any other man." Mr. Pelham Edgar read selections, which probably the writer approved as the best passages, from his essay on Thoreau. Part of the essay is already in *THE VARSITY*. From a brick judge the house. The reading itself was cleanly cut, fleet, and distanced our slow faculties, like the counting of bank-bills when the nimble teller tells them.

The debate was on the utility of titles. Mr. Coatsworth began it with that levity of which he is sometimes contriver and sometimes the victim. The Society does not take him seriously—which is to his loss and ours. The Chairman and negative could not ignore his reasonings but the audience could. We do not want to make ill-natured—what Mr. Coatsworth calls Varsitanical remarks, but he and the Society must quit laughing each other out of seriousness and reflection. Messrs. Black and Jenkins were the negative and made a strong team, breaking the opposing lines with their common battle-car—a text-book of Political Economy. Mr. Burgess fought as a volunteer under the Coatsworthy standard. He has something of that unflinching substantialness of reasoning, of that warmth without softness, the old-time weapons of the men from Knox; and if he would wield his arm with all there is in him, we might see again those nights when the Crawfords, McD's, McM's and McP's—the whole clan Mac—the formidable Knoxites, used to stand in Moss Hall fighting down opposition and if need be the meeting.

The Vice-President then laid hand to the matter and it and we profited thereby. He told us of Plato and his opinion on the subject—a humorous way our V.P. has of reminding us of the venerable age of our subjects. His best work to-night, however, was to dive down for and pick out the real pearls of sagacity that lie at the bottom of Mr. Coatsworth's apparent not very transparent trivialty.

After the debate the usually lively motions were wanting, perhaps from fear of being struck out of the minutes, perhaps because everybody was happy and had no grievance. Even the garrulous member made only a suggestion—a called-for suggestion. The committee it was meant for was also called for but was absent with a pleasing unanimity. The cause for the suggestion is as follows:

Some years ago at our *Conversazione* certain students, whose lot it had been to be exhibiting curious scientific illusions in a remote part of the College building, were heard to lament the early zeal of their fellows inasmuch, as their own late arrival at the booths or victual stands secured them but a Barmecide's feast.

MODERN LANGUAGE CLUB.

The meeting of the Club this week was decidedly good—possibly the best of the year. Although the attendance is never very large on French nights, there was on Monday last a very fair turn out of the men of the Club, and the lady members were in force.

The programme was interesting. It was opened by Miss L. L. Jones, who gave a piano solo in good style. Next came a reading by Mr. W. S. McLeay, of the Second Year, the length of which was fully redeemed by the way in which it was rendered. The Glee Club added another to the obligations under which it has placed the students by providing an octette. "Rosalie"—which might find a place with equal propriety on an English or a French programme—was encored, and the Club gave in response "The Freshman's Fate."

Miss Stewart's essay followed, on "Le Siege de Berlin." This number was marked by a merit which was none the less appreciated that it is none too frequent in the meetings of the Club—clearness of enunciation. Miss Stewart read slowly and distinctly and her essay was in consequence of real value. The same may be said of Mr. McLeay. The Glee Club again came to the front with "Alouette" and Mr. W. H. Fraser followed with another reading, which made a fitting ending to a capital programme. After a short time spent in French conversation the meeting adjourned.

ENGINEERING SOCIETY.

The usual fortnightly meeting of this society was held last Tuesday afternoon at the School of Practical Science, Mr. Roseburgh, Vice-President, in the chair. Mr. Duff concluded his paper on the Gas Engine. Mr. Jno. Leask then read a paper on "Methods of Making Corrugations on Rolls for Roller Mills." The advantages and defects of each style of cutting were well shown by a set of usefully prepared diagrams.

It is much to be regretted that the students of the School do not take full advantage of these meetings and the valuable technical information to be obtained there. Without laying too much stress on the fact that the students are free at this hour for the express purpose of attending these meetings, that fact ought to be considered by them.

POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION.

The Political Science Association met in the Y.M.C.A. hall Wednesday last, at 4 p.m., to discuss "Currency and Banking." Mr. Houston occupied the chair. Mr. Faskin opened the discussion by reading a very lengthy paper tracing historically the different materials used as money. The essayist but briefly touched on banking, stating the field was too wide for the time at his disposal. Numerous questions were asked by several of the members. Mr. Tracy wishing to know whether there were any objections to an "invertible international paper currency." After considerable doubt, uncertainty and discussion, the meeting adjourned to meet again Wednesday next and discuss "Rent" under the leadership of Mr. A. H. Sinclair.

CLASS OF '91.

For the benefit of the members of this class, we publish the Constitution which was adopted at the meeting a fortnight ago, and which was omitted last week through lack of space:

I. NAME.

1. The name of this society shall be "The Class of '91."

II. OBJECTS.

1. The objects of this society shall be (a) The promotion of friendly social relations among the members of the class; (b) To promote the interests of the year in athletic sports and in such other directions as may from time to time seem advisable; (c) To foster a spirit of loyalty to University College; (d) To promote the interest of University College in such specific ways as may from time to time be possible.

III. MEMBERSHIP.

1. The membership shall consist (1) in the year '88-'89, of all students in Arts at University College who have a Second Year academic standing, in the year '89-'90 of all who have a Third Year standing, and in the year '90-'91 of those who have a Fourth Year standing; and (2) of all students who, having been associated with the Class for two years and not intending to graduate, may be desirous of becoming members of the Class.

IV. OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES.

1. The officers shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Musical Director, a Poet, a Historian and an Orator, and these shall constitute an Executive Committee.

2. The officers shall be elected yearly at the annual meeting.

3. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Class and of the Executive, enforce the rules of order and give a casting vote in case of a tie.

4. The Vice-President shall perform the duties of President in the absence of the latter.

5. The Secretary shall keep a full and correct account of the proceedings of all meetings of the society, duly notify all members of meetings and conduct all correspondence.

6. The Treasurer shall receive and account for all moneys of the society, shall keep a membership roll in which he shall enter the name of every member of the society with the date of his admission and of each payment of fees made by him.

7. The Poet shall render into verse any matter of interest to the year and shall read the same at any meeting of the Society of which he has been given due notice.

8. The Historian shall keep a full and complete account of all events of interest to the year and shall read the same at the annual meeting.

9. The Orator shall prepare and deliver at any meeting of the Society of which he has been duly notified by the Executive an oration upon any subject.

10. The Musical Director shall superintend the musical arrangements for all meetings of the society.

V. MEETINGS.

1. The annual meeting shall be held on the first Wednesday of November in each year and ordinary meetings shall be held at the call of the Executive.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS.

1. The constitution can be altered at any meeting of the society by a two-thirds vote of those present, but one week's notice of all proposed alterations shall be given to the members of the society.

2. The rules of order shall be the same as those of University College Literary and Scientific Society.

3. Academic costume shall be worn when so ordered by the Executive.

4. A fee of 25 cts. shall be annually levied on the members of the society for the purpose of clearing general expenses and no member shall vote at the annual elections who has not paid his fee.

4. The executive shall publish yearly a Year Book containing the work of the Orator, the Poet and the Historian, and such other matters as they may deem advisable.

THE NEW COURT.

Following are some of the cases which will come before the new court at its first sitting:—

Coatsworth *v.* THE VARSITY—Criminal Libel.

Waldron *v.* *The Mail*—Libel.

Literary Society *v.* Nimrod, Jr.—Overweening Loquacity.

Omnes *v.* Exams.—Public Nuisance.

Snifkins *v.* Tiromore—Petty Larceny.

The last is a highly interesting case, the complainant alleging that the defendant, a Freshman, did put him, Snifkins, in his pocket and carry him away, contrary to the Sophomoric dignity of the said Snifkins and contrary to the statute in such case made and provided.

GENERAL COLLEGE NOTES.

A Sophomore, stuffing for examination, has developed the ethics of Sunday work in a way to render further elucidation on the subject unnecessary. He reasons that if a man is justified in trying to help the ass from the pit on the Sabbath day, much more would the ass be justified in trying to get out himself.—*Ex.*

Much of the prejudice against intercollegiate tests is due to the fact that they are said to be detrimental to good scholarship. In order to discover the real state of the case in Cornell University, a thorough examination was recently made in that institution of the records of the men who engaged in intercollegiate sports since the opening of the College. The result showed that the average scholarship for the year of each man who rowed in the crews was 70 per cent., that of base-batters 73 per cent., and that of track athletics 76 per cent., a standard of 70 per cent. being necessary to graduate. 54 per cent. of all these men graduated, which is 7 per cent. above the University per cent. of graduation. These results would seem to show that intercollegiate contests, when kept within reasonable limits, do not interfere with the general scholarship of educational institutions.—*Ex.*