

tice when they neglect to give them a due share of attention. With respect to the declamations, we would make no criticism on the instructors; all can spare the time that those exercises require for their preparation. But with essays the case is different. In composition, as in all other things, tastes vary. Each individual often has a particular vein in this department wherein he excels; but when a large class have assigned to them a common subject, it may prove to some both difficult and incongenial. The results, therefore, are not a fair test of the individual ability of the class. In fact, this disadvantage seems to us conspicuous whenever the topics for essays are assigned by the professor.

Fertile subjects, except to novices in the art of composition, are not indeed the most beneficial, but new and unfamiliar ones do not necessarily lead to the best results. Topics are sometimes assigned which require, in order to be well treated, the spare reading of a term. Several authors have to be read and their opinions have to be collected and generalized before the student can by independent thinking, form his own conclusions. The student rarely has time for this, and as a consequence, the essay does not often exhibit the originality that it should. Special reading on short notice is unfavorable to original composition. Topics which draw particularly on the miscellaneous knowledge, which all have acquired in various ways, are more likely to exhibit the individual ability and talent of the student.

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#### DEPARTMENT.

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Conducted as the *STUDENT* is, we have deemed it the best policy to remain silent in regard to the charges preferred against the University. Whatever we might say would only add fuel to the fire, because of our situation. Though we have looked on with much anxiety for the welfare of our Alma Mater, yet we

hoped we would not be drawn into the lists as either advocate or opponent. Nor should we, had not the conduct and morality of the students been impeached by an honorable gentleman of the Omaha Press.

We should dislike very much to charge a man of wilfully slandering the students as a body. But when an influential citizen of the state, in the presence of a committee of the Nebraska Legislature, intimates that students of both sexes have been seen, wandering upon the streets of Lincoln at a late hour of the night, and conducting themselves otherwise than true ladies and gentleman, we believe such a sentiment, publicly expressed, a slander, that only a speedy and proper explanation can efface.

The students, indeed, are permitted to walk upon the streets of Lincoln, outside of class hours. Their conduct has not yet merited confinement in a dormitory. Moreover students are respected throughout the city. Nor have we ever heard such a complaint made by a citizen of Lincoln. Coming from such a spontaneous fountain of charges, we have little faith in its being substantiated by facts. If this be the case, where then did the report originate? Who is the reporter? If this piece of information, together with other charges, be untrue and second handed, we demand of the tattler to confess his guilt, if he refuses, let him be ostracised from civil society. But on the other hand if this information is not second handed, we shall think it far beneath the dignity of an Omaha editor to sneak through the streets of Lincoln to see if he can not find some student that has less gentlemanly qualities than himself.

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#### SCHOOL LEGISLATION.

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Within the present century there has sprung up in American politics a new feature of legislation pertaining strictly to the facilities for higher education. Statesmen, sensible of the weighty responsibility