

our opinion of the proper scope of the contributed articles of a college journal.

It is not necessarily confined to topics that are suggested by local matters, but is as comprehensive as students may wish to make it. It is the special province of the editorial and local departments to give expression to local occurrences. If these are meagre, and sometimes they are, think twice before blaming an editor for inserting an occasional "essay" in his department.

But while we advocate for the abstract department the greatest freedom in the nature of the subject matter, the tendency of the contributor to tread along in travel-worn ruts is not to be encouraged. Let each one write, as a rule, in his own peculiar vein, for he can thus produce the best results. But when mere commonplace articles on fertile and familiar subjects characterize a large share of the contents of college papers, it is time for the writer to strive for greater originality in his productions.

His opinions should be well sustained, but let him not fear to express them in a bold and trenchant manner, or to shrink from adverse criticism. If nothing can be written, save on one side of a question, it is time to cease adding to what has already accumulated. That an article by a collegian should equal the mature efforts of an Emerson or a Whipple is not expected; but it may, and should be, scholarly, concise, and, in a considerable degree, original.

ARGUMENT IN DEBATE.

There formerly existed the custom among the students of Oxford and Cambridge, of producing in debate long and intricate arguments, based upon all the variations of the syllogism. But of late, a revolution of the custom has occurred and now the debater endeavors to cover the argument, so that he may not appear to be striving after the principles of logic, or the art of discourse.

The custom now prevails, of stating the premises, but leaving the hearer to draw his own conclusions. In some respects this is the more artful course to be pursued. For the hearer feels greatly flattered, if he be left to draw his own conclusions from his own knowledge.

But we have had occasion to notice in our debates at the Literary Societies, that frequently enthusiastic speakers forget to state the premises, but jump at the conclusion, without the mention of a premise. As a natural result the arguments attending the discussions become in reality mere assertions, and these assertions what every one of an audience knows and readily accepts, or, not having any proof to substantiate the assertions, they are considered as erroneous statements. It is this lack of argument which tends to make our debates sometimes so stale. An audience becomes weary of hearing purely assertions that are known to all, and in a short time loses interest in the speaker.

A little attention, in this respect, paid to our debates, may add a new life and interest to our societies. Though at the beginning of such a reform, an extreme in an opposite direction must be avoided.

Mere sylogistic argument is far from entertaining. So also is the whole discourse of a debater, unless each argument is made to hinge upon another. We have seen good debaters and fluent speakers, hesitate and make terrible blunders, simply because they had no system in which to present their ideas. Without some method to guide a speaker, confusion and constant repetition is an inevitable result. But a collection of well defined ideas, presented in argumentative form attracts attention, and carries a firm conviction.

A NEGLECTED STUDY.

In an editorial of the last number of the *STUDENT*, we spoke in a general manner of the claims of history as a branch of collegiate instruction. We would now more specifically urge the value of the