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EDITORS IN CHIEF.

MAY B. FAIRFIELD. H. W. HARRINGTON  
 ASSOCIATE EDITOR. MINNIE WILLIAMS  
 LOCAL EDITOR. B. B. DAVIS  
 BUSINESS MANAGER. D. W. FISHER

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Editorial.

CURRICULAE.

It would be safe to venture the assertion that comparatively few of the graduates from any of the three hundred and fifty colleges of the United States, can look back over their course of studies, when they step out over the threshold of their Alma Mater, and see each branch, though diligently pursued, stand out in clear and symmetrical form. The knowledge is more a vague impression, than a clearly defined fact that one can take hold of and apply to questions that are being constantly discussed. The recollection of here and there a term of desperate struggle over obstinate radicals, evanescent differentials or hydra-headed machines; of a weary plodding through meaningless demonstrations and consequent relief when it is past, comes up, instead of a clear outline of the development of a regular chain of pure and practical reasoning which a course of mathematics is intended to produce. The facts, epochs and personages of history are jumbled together, a shapeless mass without definite form or meaning. The sciences even, which are constantly unfolding something of deeper and higher importance in life, are often vague and unsatisfactory. Now to say that these results, if they be true, and to a certain extent they surely cannot be wholly owing to neglect on the part of the student, but rather to the fact that the many different studies interfere with, and tend to neutralize each other. The studies of aesthetic literature and mathematics are incompatible. Change is always accompanied with a loss of power. If a man turns a street corner he must slacken his pace. A change of system in politics or in business involves a reconstruction of the plans and readjustment of the forces that are always followed by a period of inactivity. We often hear a man of business say, "I have just made a change, but expect to get started again soon." The same is true of the student. When he lays down one book he must shake off the influence of that

subject before he can take up another. So we find the student who becomes absorbed in one branch of study does so at the expense of the others. In short it is impossible for the mind to become so engrossed with more than one subject that it shall be able to grasp them in all their bearings. The courses of study found in our colleges are so calculated as to involve all of these difficulties. The student who has four different studies must in the course of the eight hours which occupy the preparation of his lessons each day, change his line of thought four times. These are sure to be accompanied with a loss of energy. The different trains of thought conflict with each other. Should all the studies taken at the same time be upon the same general subject the work put upon one, would aid rather than interfere with the others. To accomplish this is not an impractical thing. Let the first years of preparatory study be given entirely to the memory, by the studies of history, language, etc., in order to form a basis for mental labors. Then let the regular course be divided into periods for each branch of study. A year for mathematics, one for sciences, one for comparative history and higher study of languages and one for metaphysical studies. Thus each line of study could be brought out and developed into a rounded form with a definite aim. Thought would be concentrated upon a single central idea for a considerable length of time, each study tending to reinforce the powers for the others. Mental force would be condensed rather than diffused, and all the advantages without the objections of special study would be gained.

"Knowledge is food, thought is digestion," is the terse epitome of one of our clear headed orators, himself a thinker and full of wisdom. We wish this golden sentence could be engraved upon every professor's mind who is ever to have anything to do with making a college course and thus deciding how much a student must accomplish in college. It is a fact that the lessons of a regular college student are sufficiently long and difficult to require all his waking hours that can healthfully be spent in study. Perhaps this is well enough for the lower classes but after the commencement of his Junior year a student should find that he has leisure for general reading, original investigation and clear thinking. But this, in practice, is far from being the case. A Junior and Senior find that to stand well in their classes they must spend all the time they have in preparation for the recitation room. No hours can be devoted to reading and thinking without running the risk of falling below the required grade at examinations. General complaint is made of the lack of original clear cut ideas and opinions in the literary productions of students and yet nothing is done to remedy the defect. Too many of the clear headed powerful men and women in this country to day are self made, not college made. The universities and colleges are not sending out into the world men and women equal to those who by strength of character and will have so nobly made themselves. As the body can be injured or destroyed by over-

loading it with food and digestion impaired or completely stopped, so can the mind be crammed so full of chunks of wisdom that cool, discriminating, productive thought is impossible. The great interests of the country twenty years hence are to be cared for by the young men and women now in college whom the present system of collegiate education is throwing into a most pitiable state: that of a literary dyspeptic.

Some college professors wonder why they are not popular and favorites with the students and often their obstinacy in seeing their own mistakes has endangered the discipline and good order and reputation of a whole institution. In olden times when the professors lived apart by themselves, spent all their time in studying, had no intercourse with the students outside of the recitation room, and seemed to take no interest in their welfare or pursuits, difficulties between students and faculties were of more frequent occurrence than now, and half the troubles to-day which do occur between a professor and his classes are due to the impressions that the students have that the professor feels no personal interest in them, cares not whether they enjoy themselves or not and intends to go no further than the class room where petulance, sternness and general ill humor and stiffness are the chief characteristics. If a professor is not popular, nine times out of ten it is his own fault and lies in his own power to make himself popular and a powerful force among the students by taking more interest in them and doing all that he can to make them happy and interested pleasantly in their work.

Nothing would add more to our personal happiness, and to the improvement of our paper than for each student to show an interest in having it good and readable. What a pleasure it would afford us for all to come crowding into the sanctum with their manuscripts, each one eager for his article to be published! What an excellent opportunity for us to display our excellent judgement in selecting! But instead of this we must bear the burden of producing all the matter, and in addition, the criticism, which, by the way, is not always of the mildest character, both of our associates and exchanges. Now it is the interest of the students in general that we labor for, and in no way would each one be more benefited than by writing a good spicy article once a month or so. Let every one who has a thought contribute it to our need and we guarantee that some day "their children shall rise up and call them blessed."

It has several times been suggested by the members of the Senior class that if they were not obliged to deliver their term orations in public the best one of them all could be selected for the commencement oration whether it were written in the spring term or in the fall. An average Senior does not generally, even in his last year, write more than one oration worthy of commencement day and in all probability this will be the one written in the long fall term when the length of the term gives more leisure for

careful production. If this is so and the oration must be delivered as soon as written it prevents its delivery in June, when the best that one can do is needed, as few students have the courage to take an old oration for their graduation theme. We hope that the powers that be will take the suggestion into careful consideration as it comes from the bottom of the heart of many a poor over-worked Senior, and excuse the class from the public delivery of the orations of this fall at least.

The STUDENT is thoroughly ashamed of the "rowdyism" that characterized halloween night. It is a great shame that the recreation and fun of so many of the boys, for they can not be called gentlemen, should take so foolish and absurd a form. What enjoyment can be derived from pulling up fifty feet or more of sidewalk and propping it up in the middle of the street, the STUDENT has not yet found out. It is very poor sort of fun to change about all the cows in a neighborhood, carry off the gates and cut the ropes of wells. It is a sort of reckless sport wholly unworthy of University students and the bloodshot eyes, haggard faces and dull looks of the day after were the marks of guilt that betrayed the culprits. Between this dissipation and election excitement lessons have been decidedly below par lately.

Editor's Table.

We agree with the *Cornell Review* that it is refreshing to meet with an exchange that has not "the stereotyped salutory of the modest incoming editor, followed by rehearsals of victories won during the summer; an exclamatory word of greeting at the head of the locals; and a summer's adventure among the literary articles," but assumes at once its undisputed dictatorial prerogative. *Collegian and Neoterian* please take note. We are morally certain that a girl wrote the exchange notices in the October number of that paper, for who but a girl could have produced such a column of gush, "implore admission into the ranks "greeting all with a friendly kiss" and putting in a parenthesis to explain that it was only figuratively.

The *Madisonensis* is one of the papers that keep a close account of their Alumni. This is as it should be. We like to see students interested in the cause of those who have gone the way before them, even though they may not have been personal friends or even acquaintances.

We like to see indications as well that Alumni sometimes remember us made by contributions to the paper. One of the exchanges contains a poem signed '76, showing that someone has not allowed the years to efface his interest in his Alma Mater. We think that this habit of signing by the year of the class' graduation to which the writer belongs make an article doubly interesting, and wish that it was more universal than it is.

The *Knox Student* contains an exceptionally good article entitled *The People in History*, the first prize oration at the Inter-collegiate contest that came off at Galesburg on Oct. 13th. Good, we say, although the *Illini*, which seems to be a little sore over the fact that the orator at