

THE HESPERIAN STUDENT

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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,

DEMERITS.

We cannot but observe the improvement in recitations, deportment, etc., among the students since the adoption of the present system of demerit marking. It is one that should be brought into general use in schools and colleges. There is something to inspire the student with a high motive to excel in all that he undertakes or that is required of him. Who does not feel himself more of a man when he knows that the professors are all on the alert to record every item of deficiency or misconduct that he may allow to be discovered? Who does not feel both his mental energies and moral firmness fortified by the assurance that he is the object of such constant care on the part of those who are training him for future usefulness? The power of example is unequalled by any influence on the character in youth. The boy imitates the actions of his father; his methods of thought and estimates of men and ideas he models after his teachers. How important then that they should in everything point him to uncompromising honor as the fixed star of his life! As a rule, a man will be just about what he is expected to be as nearly as circumstances will allow; if it is a rogue, he is pretty sure to be a rogue; if it is an honest man, he will come as near that as possible. Hence the importance of having a high standard of personal honor as the criterion of action. This is one of the main features that commend the demerit system. There is also another admirable feature in this method of college government, and that is, the unlimited power which each professor has of exercising this means of preserving the good order and industry of the institution. Naturally each one has his own opinion of the extent to which discipline of this kind should be carried, so if some are inclined to carry it too far and others not far enough, a happy medium will be the general result. We are aware that some of the students do not favor this ingenious method of curbing the rashness of youth, but let

such imagine themselves to be a Faculty of a University and they would, we think find great satisfaction and convenience in so effective a leverage, with which to enforce their will and pleasure for the general good.

The "sphere of college journalism" is a subject dear to the heart of college editors and to determine the exact rights and privileges of the editors is sometimes difficult. It is obviously unjust that the columns of a college paper should be devoted to unmitigated slander and abuse hurled against Faculty, Regents, Trustees, or students. Yet, it is equally unfair to attempt to prevent the editors from expressing their own candid opinion with regard to school matters and even criticizing them if necessary. The college paper is the only avenue open to the students for the expression of their opinions upon all subjects of interest to them and vital to the college. An institution is, to some extent, dependent for reputation upon the paper it sends forth from its walls. It is largely indicative of the literary advancement of the students and through its columns prevalent abuses in the college may be brought to public attention and then corrected, needs and wants made known and then supplied, and attention directed to the proper steps to be taken that the best interests and welfare of the students may be promoted. It would be folly to deny the growing power and influence of the college press, and the STUDENT heartily seconds the suggestion of an eastern paper that there be a convention of representatives of the various college papers throughout the country. A convention of this kind would be most beneficial and increase the power of the college press.

From time to time, the STUDENT has said what all in the University have felt, that we are greatly in need of an elocutionist and at last tired of waiting for the Regents to act, the students seem to have taken the matter into their own hands and many of them are taking lessons from the elocutionists who have their classes in the society halls. We have all said so often that we needed an elocution teacher that the saying has become very trite and perhaps for this reason has become inefficient with the Regents, though to the best of the STUDENT'S knowledge it was never given much consideration at their hands. Perhaps this effort on the part of individual teachers, who come here without any encouragement from the Regents, and take all the risks themselves, may open the eyes of those in authority to this long-felt need and lead them to establish upon a more permanent basis a department that is worthy of all encouragement and which already is making itself felt as a beneficent power among the students.

The STUDENT Association has met since our last writing and passed the long-talked of, long-laid-upon-the-table constitutional amendment providing that each society shall elect its own editor in chief. This is the death knell to all those jolly provoking quarrels which for six years and more have enlivened the yearly elections. For the future each society is to

decide for itself who shall represent them on the editorial staff. The amendment does not provide any other means than those now in vogue for the election of associate editor and local, so that there may still be opportunity, for those so inclined, to exercise their political talent in engineering the elections and their favorite candidates. The experience one gains in college politics is often of no small value afterwards, and many prominent politicians began their successful leadership of men while yet in their college course. These student days are increased in value fifty percent by an active participating in all college matters and other things being equal, those students make the finest men and women and the best workers who in school days were known as active, bright workers, leaders in every college enterprise.

A wise college president in speaking of premiums says: "I would extend the benefit of this incentive to every branch of knowledge taught by a college; not only to the regular preparatory course, but to every other. Were this done I am persuaded that a keen and honorable emulation would be excited among all classes of students." There are few schools in the country in which prizes are not offered in one way or another. They are sometimes given for declamation, sometimes for proficiency in the languages and sometimes alas, for high standing in mathematics. Our own University is something of an exception in never having had a system of rewards by medals or prizes—the student does not know whether the faculty consider that premiums are not beneficial or whether they think that a good student has his own sufficient reward in the benefit derived from a high scholarship—At all events we are left to do the best we can and if we do satisfactory work nothing is said about it, but if we fall below the mark then the demerit system forcibly reminds us of our deficiencies. There are weighty arguments both pro and con upon this vexatious question of medals and prizes—Sometimes it "smacks" of the infant class and yet the custom of great scientific and philanthropic societies in awarding prizes should, and indeed does, invest this practice with dignity and honor.

Editor's Table.

The *College Index* comes with a new tinted cover, enlarged and rejoicing in the strength and experience of four years. The students of Kalamazoo college have been agitating the question of dividing the college and preparatory students into different societies, but no change has been effected. The *Index* contains a Latin version of *Rock of Ages* by Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

The *Vidette* comes this month profusely illustrated and takes exception to the statement of the *Student Life* that there are only two illustrated college papers in existence, itself and the *Columbia Spectator*. The *Vidette* contains its usual page of the reports of the several societies with the cabalistic Grecian names. These reports are a peculiar feature of the *Vidette* which should be adopted by every paper. Even those papers which are professedly

managed by the literary societies never have more than an occasional report of society programmes.

One would think the *Wittenberger* Shakespeare mad this month. One of its literary articles is Shakespeare's Biography, the second number of classical studies is a comparison between Shakespeare and Sophocles. A Consilience of Titles is a fanciful traversery of the titles of Shakespeare's plays, and College Caesarism makes quotations from Julius Caesar. Perhaps the shade of Hamlet has wandered back by mistake to this new Wittenberg to render unquiet the minds of his fellow students.

The *University Quarterly* seems to possess in the full the sense of its own importance as the "outstanding member of the college faculty" as a distinguished professor recently denominated the college paper, and is liberal in its criticisms. We hope it will never meet with such a fate as that of the *Echo* and *Mercury* of C. C. N. Y. that it will be remembered were suppressed and their editors expelled for their free strictures on the proceedings of the faculty, and now the *Free Press* keeps its editorship a profound secret and comes forward with the mysterious legend "Published by the editors; edited by the publishers."

The *Cornellian*, Mt. Vernon, contains in its literary department an article on the Choice of Words which is good in the main, but contains the thoughtless condemnation of the use of slang that has become so common to hear. It refers to "slang phrases and words coined in unknown ways which it is to be hoped no gentleman and certainly no lady will use." Prof. Lonsbury had an article in one of the *Reviews* not long ago in defense of slang and we think everyone will concur with his views on the subject. He says it is the tendency of language in the hands of the literary class to become formal and dead; and that slang phrases having their origin in popular usage, and being coined out of actual experiences, by a process of natural selection become the feeders of the literary language of the people; so that it often happens that what is vulgar in one age is classic in the next. He derides the idea that language needs watching and cannot be trusted to the people at large.

We have received the first number of the *Howard college Index and Chronicle* from Howard college, Mo. "An institution for the education of young ladies and girls." The editorials are energetic and business like but the wit of the local column is very "girlish." Success.

Clippings.

The "Agamemnon" of Aeschylus was recently rendered in the original Greek by the students of Balliol College, Oxford the representation of this play having proved so successful, the students of Harvard will give, some time in the spring term, the *Edipus Tyrannus*.

Over 20,000 students were actively connected with the German Universities at the last semester. Of these, 3,608 were at Berlin; 3,227 at Leipzig. Michigan University has 1,367 students; Harvard, 1,350; the Mohamedan University of Cairo, Egypt, catalogues 10,000 students and 300 professors.