

# HESPERIAN STUDENT.

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### *Editorial.*

Each year the line of demarcation between the preparatory and collegiate department becomes more distinct. This shows growth and improvement. While there is much that may be justly praised, we fear that the preparatory department lacks organization, the source of all efficient work. No professor desires to teach students below the Freshman year. They have not yet formed their habits of study. They have not yet learned how to apply themselves, as they can after one or two years discipline. This discipline ought to be obtained in the preparatory department. It cannot be by ignoring it, considering it a sort of necessary evil. It needs thorough reorganization, separate tutors and professors.

It is a hard thing to say, but something mentioned quite frequently of late—that the University societies are not as good now as they have been in the past. One great difficulty is that they are too large. Every body depends upon somebody else to do the work. They seem to think that because there are so many, all of them cannot fail. In a University of from 250 to 300 students, there should be at least four or five literary societies. This would divide the thing up and give each society a sufficient number of working members. Interest in the debates seems to have decreased on the part of audience—this is probably due to the fact, that the subjects for consideration are theoretical rather than practical. The reproduction, in debate, of the newspaper controversies concerning politics and government, would probably be of most interest to the general listener. The fact, however, that the society is for the good of the performer, rather than for the pleasure of the spectator, must be borne in mind.

A few days since at the office of the Commercial, professors, students and delegates were all one of a kind. They were electioneering for some candidate or other. Two Regents are to be elected this fall. This accounts for the action of some of our professors. Whose is the fault that the tenure of the University professor depends upon the fluctuating religious complexion of a board of re-

gents? Whose can it be but the people of the state? As long as a certain class of citizens declare they will not send their children to the University, if such and such an one is professor, so long will there be internal strife and division. If a man is qualified for a certain position and discharges his duty in an honorable and acceptable manner, what matters it about his religious or political creed? Toleration is a grand and noble thing; but that is not toleration which compels one to accept certain creeds or beliefs before he can enter upon his chosen calling. It is the next thing to despotism.

It is almost impossible to pick up one of the college exchange without finding some thing in it about gymnastics. The interest shown in other colleges in this matter would seem to indicate that it is of considerable importance. There is no doubt as to the beneficial effects of plenty of exercise. But now the question arises as to the kind of exercise to be taken. For a student, violent exercise is a positive injury especially if taken irregularly. The greater part of his time his body is at rest, and in this condition the normal action of the heart correspondingly slow. In violent exercise the work of the heart is increased in proportion to the exertion put forth. If the increased action of the heart would cease with the exercise, then there would be no harm, but this is not the case. When the muscles become quiet the heart still keeps up this violent action. This organ as well as the lungs, may be worn out. John Heenan, the great pugilist, who had an immense measurement about the chest, died of consumption. Among thirty-five of the athletes of Yale—examined by an eastern physician—thirty-three had the heart-disease. In a gymnasium the horizontal bar is the most injurious in its effects on performers. Among the best modes of obtaining exercises may be mentioned the use of the Indian clubs, dumb bells and boxing gloves. It is a mistake to imagine that bearded muscle always indicates good health.

It is not an uncommon thing to hear mathematics spoken of as the best possible training for students. It is with this idea in view that so much time is devoted to mathematical studies. If education is

intended to prepare us for life work, mathematics are of little value. The majority of every day transactions tend far from mathematical relationship. What relation is theirs between a co-sine and the petty uncertainties of this life? There is no question but that a dry goods clerk wants arithmetic and engineer geometry, but this does not hold good for all of us in the same degree. The question is does this study, broaden and chasten the mind? Does it prepare the mind for the reception of all that is good and elevated? After a protracted study of this science, is the mind better enabled to grasp and hold all subjects, or is it inclined to run in a rut? This is the question. All that can be said in favor of mathematics has been said by Whewell and Mill. In answering the attack of Hamilton on the study of mathematics, Mill says in his apology,

"Descartes is the completest type history presents, of the purely mathematical type of mind, that in which the tendencies produced by the mathematical cultivation, reign unbalanced and supreme. This is visible not only in the abuse of deduction, which he carried to a greater length than any other distinguished thinker known to us, not excepting the schoolmen, but even more so in the character of the premises from which his deductions set out."

"And here we come upon the one really great charge which rests upon the mathematical spirit in respect of the influence it exercises on pursuits other than mathematical. It leads men to place their ideal of science, in deriving all knowledge from a smaller number of axiomatic premises, accepted as self evident, and taken for immediate intuitions of reason. This is what Descartes attempted to do and inculcated as the thing to be done."

Speaking of the "Conflict of Studies," Mr. Todhunter says: "The time devoted to these subjects (mathematics), viewed as a discipline is too long." It is a significant fact that Mr. Spencer hardly touches upon the utility of mathematics. In this study there is a certain precise symbolism, with which, too long an intimacy, tends to decrease rather than increase a student's power over the "mother tongue." For students who have no inclination, mathematics there is no training to be had in the study of them.