

A LARGE amount of Shakespeare literature is being added to our library. Besides the complete sets of Hudson, White, etc., and Furness' variorum editions of separate plays, many of the most valuable works of the great Shakespearian specialists are being procured and "Shakesperiana" appears regularly in the reading room. The work in this line is to be pushed by our professor of English Literature and can not but result in good. Yet it is well enough to remember that a vast amount of useless and nonsensical labor has been expended at times in "the anatomizing of William Shakespeare," and that "Shakespeare-maniacs" are as ridiculous and as inconvenient as monomaniacs of any other description. The man who could think of at least four interpretations for every passage in the Bible, and a hundred different meanings for many single sentences therein, was not more mischievously intelligent than some of the modern commentators on Shakespeare. At one time the Italians in their excess of zeal, came near "commenting" all the sense out of Dante's Divine Comedy, and were not the average reader of English a little less impulsive than some of the literary specialists the author of Hamlet might fare as hard.

Two or three years ago when speaking of the coming necessity of another literary society, an alumnus remarked that he hoped that the time of its formation was yet far distant, as it would add another evening to commencement week. The misfortune, then impending has at last befallen us. Three literary society exhibitions will have to be listened to, or at least attended, by all loyal friends of the University, besides the baccalaureate address and the commencement exercises. To intensify the long drawn out agony there will be various late-hour banquets. Last year the alumni so effectually entertained the graduating class on the night before commencement as to keep them up till after two o'clock A. M. of commencement day. That this was a kindness to the class, we are inclined to doubt, and some of the members of the class are entirely confident that it was not. It is a great pity that each of our three societies feels called upon to do just exactly as the others do and thus fill up three evenings with exercises that except to interested parties are practically the same; and it is also a pity that only one of the commencement exercises can take place in the day time. Is it brains or gas light that gives the charm to the closing exercises of the year?

The closer organization of our Alumni is a thing greatly to be desired. The plaintive wail about their inability to carry out their plans which one of them inserted in the annual last year, should never be repeated. The number of our graduates is now large enough so that a goodly number of them ought to get together at each commencement and reenforce their enthusiasm for their alma mater. The very cheapness of the education afforded by state institutions seems to produce in some minds a cold indifference towards the giver, that is, the state. We are apt to look upon the civil government as either a taskmaster or as a machine constructed especially for the use of politicians. Whatever it gives us we are accustomed to look upon as so much found, a thing

to be by us appropriated but for which no thanks are due. Through the strife of local factions the amount of our biennial appropriation is fixed, and it comes to seem as though generosity had nothing to do with it. But that college which calls forth no feeling of ardent attachment is a poor specimen, is, in fact a failure. The line of reasoning which brings us to the conclusion that the state is not generous is superficial and false. The wrong conception to which it leads will pass away as the University becomes better established, and in the meantime all the alumni should unite in an attempt to keep up an acquaintance with the institution and with each other.

#### THE CHARACTER OF HORATIO.

When an artist sets about the painting of a landscape his first care is to rightly conceive the proper conditions of light and shade, those that will most correctly produce the required effects in the finished picture. Where some prominent feature in the scenery is delineated, there must be the greatest attention paid to the tones and shadows. By the brilliant and sombre hues of foreground and background are the difficult problems of representing distance and nearness most readily solved.

The same rule of taste governs literature. As the artist in colors throws deep shadows behind the foremost objects so the artist in thought, in creative word-painting, brings together different ideas, different images, different personalities, and, by vivid contrasts, bring out the silent points and gives to the imaginery men and women are almost real and life-like individuality.

In *Hamlet* the characterization of Horatio furnishes an example of what has just been said. Shakespeare has drawn the noble friend of Hamlet as a figure in the background, has painted him in neutral tints. Horatio is primarily a shadow thrown into the picture to intensify the striking features of the hero prince. Where Hamlet is hasty, Horatio is self-restrained; where Hamlet is excited, enthusiastic, delirious and almost raving, Horatio is calm, unemotional, collected and reserved. The mental hurricane that sweeps over the life of Hamlet is made only more intense in its effect upon the reader's mind by the peaceful, even, unruffled life of Hamlet's friend. Horatio, then, is in many respects opposite to Hamlet. Both have their points of similarity, else how could they be warm and trusted friends? Their differences are far more striking than their resemblances and on account of those differences is Horatio important in the drama where he plays a part.

That an object is in shadow does not prevent a painter from giving it distinctness and many characteristics of form and shape. If you have ever examined well-executed night-scene you will see how much may be almost concealed and yet almost revealed. The ability to attribute well-marked prominence to an object while, at the same time, it is shrouded in obscurity is a task worthy of a genius.

Shakespeare has succeeded most admirably in giving those few masterly touches to the character of Horatio which cause it to assume some definite shape and proportion and that, too, without removing it from the twilight dimness of the background. Much may be inferred from what Horatio says, but still more from what he leaves unsaid. A single, delicate stroke of the poet-painter's brush reveals far more than could one, guided by a less skillful hand, in half a hundred.

With the first appearance of Horatio he commands at once our respect and admiration. The practical common-sense,