

preciation of each oration, can never be secured, and thus decisions are rarely just to all parties. The work is its best reward. If this is recognized by all participants, then the contest is an institution that should be encouraged as a valuable adjunct to the college course.

No one need complain that we are not doing enough work. All the courses have been so enlarged during the past year, that it is necessary for the students to work almost day and night to keep up. Whether this is a good plan or not is doubtful. It is certainly necessary to oblige the students to do a great deal; but possibly too much is required by the present courses. THE HESPERIAN fears that the result will be the loss of a number of students before the end of the year—some through the lack of ability, some through overwork. Perhaps we can spare anyone who cannot keep along with his class, but certainly it is not best to compel a student to leave study on account of his health. There may be no danger of this, but we are afraid of it, and would like to call the attention of the "powers that be" to the matter and see if it cannot be modified. This has already been done in the department of History, where a three hour study counts for five. Though the work is not much lightened the recitations are fewer in number and at least some time is saved. Would not farther changes in the same direction be beneficial?

DIRECT results from the study of Literature are perhaps more unsatisfactory than from any other portion of a college course. Even one term of mathematics, or the languages, will give the careful student a consciousness of new strength, but in Literature he often feels as if the time had been wasted. The cause does not lie in defective methods of instruction; neither can it be charged to a lack of interest on the part of the student. Knowledge and a due appreciation of literature cannot be gained by a few weeks grinding. Hard work during the entire course ought to produce tangible results in the Senior year or at its close. Much cannot be expected sooner unless a natural taste exists before the study is begun. To the discouraged Sophomore we would say, then, do not expect to become a critic at once. Dig away at your early English in full confidence that taste is gradually developing, and that before the end of the course you will feel that the harvest has been reached. It is as impossible to acquire a thorough understanding of literature in one or two terms as it is to become a musician in the same length of time. The study of both is unending and appreciation comes in each case only after years of patient toil.

## IMPRESSIONS.

One of our exchanges perpetrates, in a late number, a fine little piece of imagination in regard to the reality of existence. Such things are amusing, perhaps instructive; but if one cannot definitely decide that life is a dream, it were better to accept it as a reality. A life may easily be spent in the vain endeavor to prove or disprove our very existence; and what if, at last, it should be reality? Yet the assumption that this existence is but a dream appears to us to prove too much. The dream must have a dreamer; and, whether waking or sleeping, the existence of that dreamer is certainly real. Therefore, if we should wake up in death and remark on a queer dream of earth, our present existence is no less real for that. So, friend, let such thoughts be only a side show, a thing for amusement only and in all else treat life as practical.

\*\*

Few things are more patent than the over-weening ambition which at some time or other affects all students. Freshmen aspire to treat themes which would justly make even a learned professor pause, and so high does the ambition of the Second Prep. soar that nothing earthly is worth his notice. As an example, an article on "The German Element in the European States," which appeared in our exchange from Notre Dame some time ago, is good. It would seem that any person of ordinary common-sense should know that, within the limits of a short article, only the broadest generalization could be made. When the author, therefore, tells us that he does not contemplate an exhaustive treatment of the subject, we are relieved and profoundly conclude that he either is, or is not, a fool. His article is the result of "some thinking and more investigation." We think perhaps the positive and comparative degrees are well placed and become still more convinced when we read that we are to have a "few facts," not abstractions; but our conviction is clinched when our would-be writer gravely describes how "deep and vast" the subject is in comparison, (he should say contrast), with his abilities. Facts—cold facts—are the results of investigation, abstraction is the result of thinking; and applying this test to the article under consideration it is fair to say that he should have said "no thinking, some investigation." But having thus moderated our anticipations, we are somewhat indignant when told what preparation to make to fully understand the subject; why, bless you! we didn't expect to fully understand it—and don't yet.

But, if we must, we must, and so we proceed to "transport" our minds back to the time of Noah or, as our author has it, "Noe." We have taken it for granted that our guide uses the term "transport" only in a figurative sense and does not intend that we should charter a car or any thing else in that line. So we imagine that there was once such a man as Noe, and let visions of great big arks, and all sorts of wild animals float through our brain and are transported—not with joy however. The author now having carried us to the valley of the Euphrates and thousands of years behind our time, gravely says that Noe had, we know, three sons etc. It is bad enough but to assume that Noe had three sons, nor have we any positive knowledge that such a person ever existed. But, perhaps, enough of this. We have a sample of the piece in the foregoing assertion. Evidently the writer spoke the truth when he inadvertently spoke of investigation. He has some paragraphs, however, that are too choice to be omitted. e. g. "Among these, Rome, more successful, perhaps, than others in her augmentation by new-comers, gradually insinuated herself into power; and being a nation for the most part composed of lawless and desperate men, at last obtained such supreme