

graduate with the graduate; they give the college student a glimpse of life after graduation, and finally they keep warm the sympathies of the *alumnus* for his college associations and his *alma mater*. But this should not be restricted to the literary societies. Indeed we question if THE HESPERIAN is not the more proper medium. If published they would come to the notice of a much greater proportion of the students and those interested in the University, and their good influence would be thus enhanced. But even if sent to us through the societies, we shall take pleasure in publishing or otherwise noting these communications from our *alumni*. Our interests should be theirs and we emphasize the need of some such connection between the University and her graduates.

THE gradual though rapid accumulation of wealth by the citizens of this western state not only tends to increase the number of students attending the University and other colleges throughout the state, but also makes it possible for many more to complete a college course than in earlier and less prosperous times. Thus as the number of graduates grows larger each year the question of Commencement orators presents itself for settlement. We have now reached the time when the graduating class begins to number more than can conveniently appear with graduating addresses, as has formerly been the custom in the University. Although not large, the class of '86 has chosen from among its members six orators who shall deliver the addresses Commencement Day. We are pleased to note that the selections are not made in accordance with the rule whereby those showing the best college record, or those most popular among the students are selected. On the contrary the aim seems to have been to represent as nearly as possible all courses of study, and beside, to select such members as can most conveniently perform this irksome though customary duty towards their *alma mater* and an expectant public. There are, perhaps, some things common to the universities of the east that we might well adopt, modified of course to suit our western ideas and spirit. But all customs tending to incite the student to special effort for the sake of high marks is to be discouraged as unworthy those who understand the true intent of the university training. A time may come when some such plan will be necessary in order to obtain the best results from the students of the U. of N., but that day is far distant. As remarked by a member of the faculty a few days ago, "the work is sufficiently hard, and is as thoroughly performed." The "markings" are at best but faulty indices of the work and excellencies accomplished.

## MISCELLANY.

The leaders of any great movement must pass through the ordeal of popular criticism. As an eminent writer has said, all reforms have three stages, viz: ridicule argument, adoption. What is known in current history as the aesthetic movement seems now to have reached the first named stage. In the public press and in common conversation it is alluded to, if at all, in a tone of ridicule. Oscar Wilde and his grotesque band of followers are held up as the true apostles of culture and aestheticism. But it is unfair to judge of any movement by the stragglers and camp followers who infest its rear. The lovers of the sunflower and of China decoration may no more truly stand for the aesthetic school than did Henry VIII. represent the reformation. It is only from recognized leaders—from such as Ruskin and Matthew Arnold that we may learn the true spirit of this movement.

The aesthetic school would lay great stress upon a faculty of the mind which often receives but little attention. It is known under various names. It has been called the "taste," the "aesthetic sensibility," the "sense of beauty." The faculty is regarded as being capable of a high degree of training—as resembling the other mental faculties in that it grows more powerful by exercise, and the advocates of the school would urge upon us the importance of its cultivation. They maintain also that the development of this sensibility brings its own reward. Thus the appreciation of beautiful scenery is a true source of enjoyment, but one which a cultivated taste alone can give. It is not the peasant of the valley who finds most in the scenery of the Alps—it is the tourist from afar whose appreciation of the sublime and the beautiful is the result of training the proper powers of the mind.

The same is true of the fine arts and of literature. Appreciation of their highest form requires a correspondingly high sense of beauty on the part of the individual. Gaudy colors, a flashy style, may captivate vulgar minds, but for all such the divine creations of a Raphael or an Aeschylus are wholly devoid of charm.

But the aim of the aesthetic school, say its advocates, is more than simply to afford enjoyment. The cultivation of the taste has a tendency not only to please but also to elevate. Lamartine in his life of Homer supposes the case of a savage who by some means is enabled to discover and read a copy of the Iliad. The author then considers how the great epic with its lofty style, its grand similes, and its ennobling sentiments, would improve the condition of its degraded reader; how it would lift him above his rude surroundings and enable him to forget the sensual in the admiration of the beautiful. The instance is a typical one and well illustrates the principle. There is an ethical side to the subject. The youth of cultivated tastes is not easily enticed into the haunts of sin. For him the dingy gambling hall or the low variety theatre has few attractions. The fact is well worth considering. Let the moralist learn that conscience is not the only faculty which leads us to abhor vice, and that the proper appreciation of beauty is a useful agent in the development of human character.

The aesthetic movement then, is not without good results. Its leaders deserve our gratitude, not because they have endowed us with a love of beauty, for that is inborn, but before they have directed our attention towards what is too often a neglected faculty.

The question may be raised as to the material good—the practical worth of such studies as are here required. But the elevation of humanity is a task whose value cannot be estimated by figures alone. Prof. Swing maintains that beauty is