

when the University seemed divided against itself, has lately written from Johns Hopkins that adverse criticisms are perhaps as frequent and as violent there as here. He had thought that the U. of N. was unfortunate in that it was a state institution, and there was consequently greater opportunity for criticism, but a wider knowledge proved to him that criticism is not worse here, and perhaps not so, utterly groundless as elsewhere. We too have been convinced that such uncalled for criticisms belong to the community of colleges and all similar well-meaning institutions. Groundless criticisms can indeed work to our disadvantage. Friends of the school will therefore be extremely careful lest in writing up the news for our state paper, they should carelessly misrepresent us. We have no sympathy however for those who call themselves students and who profess friendship, and a common interest while in reality they avail themselves of our confidences only to lay bare our shortcomings, and make sport of our accomplishments. Such students, students in name only, will sooner or later be discovered, and when known cannot be treated as other than their actions stamp them.

We certainly agree with our contributor in his "opinions" concerning the work of the college editor. We acknowledge the ground for complaint and we appropriate the excuses made for us. The fact that instructors and students do not support a college paper so liberally as they should is patent. And yet we of the U. of N. have little ground for complaint on that score, but could of course reconcile ourselves to any improvement in that line. Whether or not instructors and students should feel themselves bound to aid us by literary contributions, however, is quite another question. It is true that many college papers are thus supported. It is also true that THE HESPERIAN has been criticised time and again because its management preferred a paper published for the students, subject to their control, but the work of composing and editing delegated to a board of editors, rather than a paper made up of literary contributions. That is, since the paper could at most contain but a limited portion of the articles written by the students, and since those articles are of little value or interest to others than students, we have thought it best to publish very few such contributions. In the last number we asked for contributions from *alumni*, but you understand that such articles must of necessity arouse a more general interest, and in general be of a much more creditable style than those of the undergraduates. But as an editor we could suggest other reasons why the publishing of promiscuous articles should be discouraged. In the first place we should be charged with inability to do the work required of

us, since we must ask others to contribute to our publication. Again, we would find it hard to discriminate between the articles handed in for publication, and would too often be accused of asking or accepting such aid from a certain class or clique. No, Sans Detour, we prefer a college paper with a full local column, a few editorial notices, and short, spicy contributions, such as yours are, to any miniature North American Review, or similarly dry and weighty publication.

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### MISCELLANY.

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#### REVIEWS.

While Oliver Wendell Holmes has attained eminence in many lines of thought, he always seems to remember that he is a doctor, and he never allows his readers to forget that fact. Moreover, he is somewhat given to theorizing, and he often carries his theories to conclusions that appear rather startling to timid minded people. His object in writing *Elsie Venner* is to illustrate his ideas on the subject of heredity and its influence on the vexed question of moral responsibility.

Some of these ideas are elucidated at the very beginning of the book. As each character is introduced he is ticketed off as belonging to a certain class, produced by a given combination of circumstances, much as a naturalist might label a collection of insects and write out the characteristics of the species to which each belongs. The result of this is to give the reader an uncomfortable feeling that he is looking at the movements of a collection of automations instead of real men and women. But as Dr. Holmes' theory, carried to its logical conclusion, would reduce us all to so many machines, we cannot complain of this feature of the book. This theory is put into language by Bernard Langdon as follows: "Each of us is only the footing up of a double column of figures that goes back to the first pair. Every unit tells; and some of them are plus and some minus. If the columns don't add up right it is commonly because we can't make out all the figures. I don't mean to say that something may not be added by Nature to make up for losses and keep the race up to its average, but we are mainly nothing but the answer to a long sum in addition and subtraction."

*Elsie Venner* is introduced as a strange and incomprehensible being. Self-willed, violent, and capricious, she will submit to no authority. Neither her father nor her teachers can control her. Her most prominent feature seems to be her piercing black eyes, which have the power of fascinating and drawing to her any whom she may fix her gaze upon. The secret of her existence is not explained until near the end of the story, but hints are so frequently thrown out that we soon understand the case; and any resentment we might feel at her conduct is changed to pity for her misfortune. "An ante-natal impression has mingled an alien element in her nature," and has poisoned her whole existence. This is the reason that she takes her solitary rambles on the mountain, seeking the fatal rattlesnake ledge. The serpents themselves seem to feel her affinity, and cower before the glitter of her eyes. The two natures struggle within her, resulting in constantly varying moods. At length love comes to the aid of the womanly element, and from that time a change is apparent. It appears possible that had this feeling been reciprocated she might have become humanized and, freed from the curse of her birth, lived a happy life. But Bernard Langdon, though