

warrior to allow his sons to remain at home, so he sets out with them for the wars, where, after distinguishing themselves in several ways, he and his older son are captured and tortured nearly to death with true barbarian ferocity. The younger son, sometime before fallen in love with the daughter of the enemy's leader, deserts to their side, but is afterwards met by his father on the battle field and deliberately shot by him.

The reader may perhaps be somewhat surprised that I have given so condensed an account of the story, but as a matter of fact the plot, if stripped of the accompanying descriptive passages, would scarcely occupy more than one short chapter of the novel. This leads me to the belief that notwithstanding Gogol's passionate love for the stirring scenes and warlike actions or the old half-barbarous times, his love of what ever was beautiful in nature led him to sacrifice the former to the latter. His work, therefore, is but one long description of the changing scenes through which his characters are led. In each he makes them halt in order that he may allow his fancy free rein to revel among those wild Russian beauties of nature which he had from his earliest youth been quick to appreciate. Although, as I said, Gogol is never so much at his best as when describing the familiar natural objects about him, in his manner of conducting the fierce and bloody battles carried on by the Cossacks, and in his bold and startling accounts of the atrocities committed upon the battle field, he is none the less remarkable.

In conclusion, I venture to say that nine-tenths of those who come to read this book have formed a very different conception of its nature from what it really is. We have become so accustomed to the stereotyped English, French or American novel, in which the love affairs of the hero and heroine play such a conspicuous part, that we are surprised and delighted when we find a book in which these features have no place, or if they have, at least a very subordinate one. Now I should be bold indeed were I to deprecate the novels of the former class; they are excellent in their own path, but what I complain of is the uniformness with which the plot is evolved. In the "Taras Bulba" of Gogol we have an utter and complete change of scene, manner of life, persons, and in fact everything which goes to make up the composition of the story. Those who read a novel in the hope of drawing comparisons between some of the actions there recorded and his own individual experience, and in this way of rendering it of more personal interest to him will probably not find in this work anything to his purpose. As far as I myself am able to judge, it should be read with an eye to the powerfully drawn pictures of nature which are here presented, and in noting how simply and naturally every thing is told. In other words, he must in fancy put himself under the influences under which the author wrote; he must withdraw himself from extreme surroundings and picture to himself, so far as he may, the images which Gogol puts forth, and he will then be able to appreciate him as he is worthy of being appreciated, and will recognize in him one of the master minds of his age.

#### YALE ECHOES.

To one who has spent all his college life in the 'far west,' coming at once into the vicinity and atmosphere of Yale opens up whole new worlds of ideas. Until he becomes accustomed to the close connection of the past with the present, the historic associations are constantly carrying him back to half a century or a century ago. For instance, when a recent lecturer in Dwight Hall read to his audience of students an ex-

tract from the diary of Johnathan Edwards, kept when he was a student at Yale, the sentiment expressed and the authority of the name may have been all that attracted the notice of those accustomed to similar appeals to history which was made in localities familiar to them; but to the semi-foreigner from Nebraska there was a tinge even of the romantic in the reference. So the frequent reference to historic names as well as the existence of old buildings and other works of former generations makes history more real, brings into the realm of actuality the tales of years and makes the men of those years to seem a living influence still.

One soon realizes indeed, that the institutions here are as yet new, and it comes to mean much to him that he is still in *New England*. Yet, coming from the very young West, where all plans are inchoative, and all movements imitative one cannot but be impressed with a sense of solidity and permanence, and of real antiquity. If sometimes he fancies he discerns a musty odor, or if a certain rigidity suggests to him that ossification is imminent, he is none the less grateful for the air of refinement which he breathes, and for the perfection of scholarship with which Yale surprises him. Let not the above unpremeditated remark concerning 'rigidity' be unkindly emphasized. It is, indeed, emphatically applicable to the people in general in respect to their life, social, political and religious, but hardly to the intellectual world of Yale professors, nor to the activity of Yale student life.

The West is enterprising, but if anyone thinks that the West only can be thus characterized, he may undeceive himself by spending the first three months of the college year in New Haven observing the various lines of activity in which the spirit of enterprise here manifests itself. And among the first things to attract the observer's attention is the wonderful spirit of competition in the field—or fields—of athletics. Of course, he knows the interest in base ball and foot ball games but now he comes to see of what paramount importance these are to hundreds of students and their friends. One would think that the frequent physical injuries, some fatal, many serious, which to a disinterested observer are the most striking results of these field contests, would constitute an argument to persons of average sensibility in a civilized land for moderation, to say the least. It is such to unprejudiced persons.

But let not these remarks be construed as a criticism upon Yale University. Else our view were very narrow. It is only because here, as everywhere, one finds retreating evil mingled with advancing good that he falls into such reflection.

Out of the many things of interest here, one can hardly decide what few he should mention. The "college spirit" is certainly intense enough. It helps make a young man's future look bright to see gather here at commencement time from all corners of the earth, gray headed men who graduated thirty, forty, fifty, and even sixty and more years ago, to hear them in their class reunions sing old college songs, revive old class jokes and banter one another with all the freedom of student life.

Time would fail us to tell of Commencement week, of the annual cane rush, of the struggle between Sophomores and Freshmen for the possession of the fence, of the Junior promenade, of the parades, the college songs, the boat races, and all the matters of interest that a thousand students add to the daily life of a small city.

There are many other items, such as the college grounds and buildings, the uniforms of various clubs, the daily appearance of students on the street—little things, of which no one who has always lived here would think of telling, but which to one coming from a land wholly barren in many respects in which this is particularly fruitful, are matters of interest.