

frat journals about a year ago. This letter was written by a fraternity member of this University and in the letter was the astonishing information that the chapter had been so busily engaged in initiating members during the term preceeding that the members had no time to do any literary work. It is only necessary to add that that particular fraternity initiated three new members during the term referred to. We wonder if all our fraternities are so busy initiating new members this year that they have not time in which to do literary work. Yet the fraternity people may insist that this year they carry out literary programs at the chapter meetings. If so we may be permitted to question the truth of this assertion, for we once read in a fraternity magazine, that no frat, no matter how truthful he might be in other matters, could tell the truth about his own fraternity. Perhaps this was an exasperation, but then a frat should know more about such things than we do and so we only give his words. Draw your own conclusions.

LITERARY.

In the *Cosmopolitan*, December, 1889, Frank G. Carpenter, a traveling correspondent, writes an instructive account of the present condition of Pekin, "The Capital of the Dragon's Empire." The average American is as ignorant in matters relating to China, as the lower classes of that country are with respect to foreign nations, all of which, the correspondent says, they believe to be subject to their onipotent Emperor. The writer gives an interesting description of the city and its people; but, owing to the sacredness, in the eyes of the Chinese, of the person of their Emperor, and the various palaces in which he lives and performs his devotions, the traveller is barred from seeing what would, perhaps, most interest us of America. But, owing to the writer's experience as a traveller, one may rest secure in the belief that whatever of interest one may see in the capital of this now progressive Empire, he has accurately described.

One fact justifying the appellation, "Eternal City," applied to Rome, is the venerable age and apparent indestructibility of some of its buildings. They were constructed at a time when massiveness entered largely into architectural ideals, and they have withstood the decay of two thousand years. The largest, most massive of all these structures was the Coliseum, built in the first century of the Christian era. In the course of the centuries since its construction, the Coliseum has been put to many uses. It was built for the gratification of a degenerate mob, whose chief delight was the gladiatorial combat; while farther down in its long history, it was de-ficted to church purposes. It has survived the ravages of time, and the vandalism of Barbarian and Christian rulers, and today impresses the traveller with a realization of the absolutism of the Empire, whose ruler could command the servile labor necessary for the erection of so vast a structure. Professor Lees, of the University, recently procured an excellent photograph of this famous structure. Although the photograph is large, being, approximately, four feet square, it is remarkably distinct, having none of the blur so noticeable in

many large photographs. A part of the wall of the structure, as seen in the picture, still towers aloft to its full height, while, of the remaining part, only two stories now stand. One may obtain a faint idea of the original structure, by noticing what portion of it remains, even after several palaces have been built from its materials. One can see plainly near the center of the photograph the cross and inscription placed on the wall by Pope Pius IX, dedicating the building to the Catholic church. To the right of this inscription is another cross set in a niche of the wall. The next best thing to seeing the Coliseum itself, is to see a good representation of it. Thanks are due to Professor Lees for placing where the students may see it, so beautiful a photograph of a structure, which, while attesting the ability of the Romans to erect enduring edifices, brings forcibly to mind the corruption of the blood-thirsty populace whose favor was sought in its constuction.

For the January number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, some nameless contributor has written an article entitled "A Precursor of Milton." in which the writer attempts to prove Milton guilty of plagiarism. It seems that this is not the first time that such charges have been made; but, hitherto, the unlucky accuser has retired from the combat heaped with ridicule. This latest accuser, however, has evidently tested in a thorough manner the soundness of his position; and has made a careful study of the literary bearing on the point at issue.

Alcimus Avitus, a kinsman of the Emperor Avitus, was born in Auvergne about the middle of the fifth century A. D. About the year 490, he became bishop of the see of Vienne. Although much of his time was engrossed by the political and religious disputes of that unsettled age, he found time to engage in literary pursuits. At last, after having enjoyed the friendship of kings and popes, he died in 525.

One of the poems written by Avitus, the *Atlantic* contributor holds, furnished Milton with many of the happy expressions and lofty strains embodied in "Paradise Lost." Avitu's poem is divided into five books, concerning the creation, the fall of man, his punishment, the deluge, and the departure of Israel from Egypt. Milton's critic bases his charge of plagiarism not merely upon similarity of thought in the two poems, though that alone, if striking, might be sufficient, but quotes parallel passages wherein the similarity both of thought and expressions is very noticeable, Milton often using the same word (Anglicised) found in the Latin poem of Avitus. The contributor, in sustaining his argument, does not at all go to the extreme of asserting Avitus to be a greater poet than Milton. He points out, on the contrary, that the scope of Milton's poem is far broader and bolder than that of Avitus. He criticises Milton's style as lacking the simplicity of Avitus', and asserts that Milton's language is most perfect in those passages where the resemblance is most striking. It would seem from the fairness of the critic in treating his theme that he has not written maliciously to undermine the reputation of the great English poet, but from heartfelt belief that injustice has, perhaps, been done to a poet of another language, in order needlessly to exalt the transcendent genius of one whose fame needs no such artificial support. The criticism is worth reading as expressing the candid opinion of one, who perhaps, has the material to prove the truth of his allegation.

He who has not read Chamisso's "Peter Schlemihl" should do so in order to obtain an idea of the vicissitudes in the life of a man deprived of that seemingly needless appendage, his shadow. The story is autobiographical, it being in the