Kansas University. It seems to us that the *Review* man has in this article admitted what we have maintained for some time—that fraternities always ruin literary societies. He says that it is the social element that has ruined the literary societies at Lawrence; we know that the social element in the University of Nebraska has ever been opposed to the best interests of literary work. The writer also says that the faculty "are devising schemes for the renewal of interest in the societies." We hope that that day will never come when it will be necessary for the faculty here to step in and bolster up our literary societies. Yet if the fraternities succeeded in their efforts we cannot see what is to prevent the same state of affairs here, for the same causes will invariably bring about the same results. It would be a dead letter in the constitution of our oratorical association to prohibit all but members of a live literary society from entering the contests, for although we have had a few contest here lately, yet the fraternity people have not entered any of them.

All members of literary societies who desire to see those societies flourish should use all their efforts to counteract the influence of our social element. They should take the greatest interests in their respective societies; attend every meeting and try to induce every body else to do likewise.

LITERARY.

The "Magazine of Poetry," an illustrated quarterly review, published at Buffalo, N. Y., has just completed its first volume. Its contents consist of biographical sketches of American poets, particularly those just rising into prominence, with a few choice selections from the writings of each. The biographical notices may be criticised on account of their flattering tone; each author is discussed by an intimate friend or ardent admirer. Hence the value of these contributions is uncertain. Many of the poems are those that have already had a well deserved popularity among all classes. Altogether, the pages of the "Magazine of Poetry," are bright and attractive, and it performs valuable service in making possible the distribution of literature often otherwise not to be obtained by many.

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The recent publication of Brice's "American Commonwealth" has drawn renewed attention to the author's pains taking care as a historian. Bryce's genius is versatile. For almost twenty years he has been regius professor of civil law at Oxford. The duties of this position have kept him busy for eight months of each year. His vacations he has spent in travelling in all quarters of the civilized world and publishing the results of his observations. For the last ten years he has been a member of the house of commons, a devoted follower of Gladstone. His "American Commonwealth" was published only after he had made three visits to the United States, carefully comparing each time his impressions of America with those he had received on his former trip. Hence his book is not the account of affairs in the United States as they would appear to a hasty, inconsiderate traveller. He discusses, in the order given, the national government, the state government, the party system, public opinion, and social institutions. It will thus be seen that he covers much ground that is in great measure familiar to many an American voter. But his work is intended primarily for Englishmen, whose ideas with reference to America are often very vague. This treatise, however, will be very valuable to Americans, since in it are expressed the opinions of an enlightened foreigner on matters that are of moment to Americans. It seems on reviewing the book that but little, if any, prejudice is shown as against the governmental system of the United States. On the other hand it will no doubt indicate to a citizen of this country various faults that his own prejudice has concealed from him. On this reflection is based the book's peculiar value to Americans; it is written by a foreigner, enlightened and painstaking, influenced in the last degree either by prejudice for his native land, or against the land of which he writes. It is certainly seldom that a man engrossed in the politics of his own country, above all at the present juncture in British politics, should find time and inclination to write so honestly and carefully of another nation. Bryce, the historian, the statesman, the professor, the traveller, while not so renowned as he would have been had he chosen to confine his efforts to one profession, has won the unique fame of being one of the truly versatile men of the age.

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The recent death of Robert Browning in Venice has occasioned much comment in the critical journals and other standard publications both in Europe and this country, on the life and work of that great poet. While many of these comments are inevitably influenced by the fact of his recent death, their multiplicity bears testimony to the hold Browning has on the thought of the educated literary critics of both continents. Browning was a man who entered upon his literary life with an ideal, constantly adhered to by him, which was, to say the least, not the ideal held in view by the leading writers of the time. He did not avail himself of the usual modes of obtaining popularity. Throughout a long literary life he did not swerve from his ideal, and lived to see his works obtain popularity among those whose criticism he valued. Those who most admire his writings do not deny that they are often obscure, necessitating close consideration of various passages to obtain the meaning the author intends to convey. This obscurity will, no doubt, always baffle and repel the casual reader; but there may be something in the suggestion at which Browning seems to hint in one of his passages, that he who expresses great thoughts is often necessarily a difficult writer to follow.* He was a man who had faith in the ability of mankind to work out its destiny hapily; his later life was seemingly not made miserable by the pessimistic view of human affairs which the old so often have. Browning's long life of usefulness, and the results of his constant adherence to what he thought was the thought was the true aim of the writer, will do much to encourage the emulation of his virtues. His position is secured as one of the greatest poets of this century.

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Life at the French court in the reign of Louis XIV and his successors, down to the Revolution, was intensely artificial. The pernicious results of the centralizing policy of previous monarchs were well illustrated by the character and occupation of the courtiers. All individuality was suppressed. Life for them was one long round of form and ceremony observed in the minutest details of the most commonplace acts. Against the artificiality fostered by sach a life there was naturally a revolt. This revolt began in England, but it was