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## Monthly Musings, Vol. 2, No. 8

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# Monthly Musings

"MAIDEN MEDITATIONS, FANCY FREE."—Shakespeare.

Richmond College.

VOL. II. }  
NO. 8. }

RICHMOND, VA., MAY, 1877.

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## The Muse.

### THE INDIAN MOTHER.

The author of the following, one of Tennessee's gifted sons, though unknown to the literary world as an aspirant for honors, may lay claim to no little merit for this gem of poetry.—ED.

[There was a legend among the Natchez that the departed spirit always sent a token of its weal or woe to the nearest relative, who watched anxiously for the first living thing that appeared near the grave. If it was a reptile or any creeping thing, it was considered that the dead was in a state of punishment, if a bird or any walking animal, it was regarded as a token of the perfect happiness of the departed friend.]

The mother knelt by the fresh-heaped mound,  
Alone in the dim and dark'ning woods,  
For the red sky tinged with the sun's last ray,  
Seemed hued with the blood of a hero slain,  
And the taper flames of the woodland's God,  
Beamed flickering forth o'er the concave vault;  
And night as a dark-robed mourner came  
With a silent step and darkened brow,  
While nature stole away to weep,  
And the flowers, tho' closed their petaled eyes,  
Awoke to catch each pearly tear,  
While nature wept; her minstrel mates  
Fled each away to their leafy homes.  
Naught was heard but the savage howl  
Of the prowling wolf as it rent the air,  
Or the vented sob of nature's woe,  
As it rustled the leaves and boughs among;  
Yet still, by the grave the mother knelt—  
Waited with unwearied hope,  
The token from the spirit land.  
Albeit, her heart was sick and faint,  
And weary of its own sad beat;  
Yet for the token which might tell  
Whitherward wended the loved one's flight,  
These lone, dark hours she still kept watch,  
And woke the echoes with her chant.

"Light of my wigwam, bright-eyed one,  
Child of bosom, where art thou gone?  
Art thou now in the spirit land?  
Say, hast thou joined the hunter's band,  
Chasing the deer, and the swift wild roe,  
The smile of the Great Spirit gleaming thy brow?  
Sadly I wait by thy cold earthly bed,  
The token which tells me where thou hast fled;  
Child of my bosom, thy journey is long,  
May the Good Spirit help thee, joy of my song!  
'Tis a fearful path for thine untired wing,  
But falter not—to thine helper cling—  
O'er the misty vale the blue hills shine,  
Bear on bright bird, the haven is thine.

"Hark! 'tis the token, the nightingale's voice!  
Thou art happy my child, and thy friends rejoice,  
Thou hast gone to the land of the happy dead,  
Gone where thy father's couch is spread,  
He has folded thee now on his loving breast,  
While thy mother mourns in her lonely nest;  
For hushed are thy notes sweet song-bird now,  
And hid from me thy beauteous brow,  
Dark is my wigwam, cold and lone,  
Sunbeam, joy and bird—all gone!"

"CAPHON."

BUDDING HEARTBREAKER.—Dear little thing; she is only about four years old. She was walking down the path from the west wing of the capitol to the gate. Her dress was only an inch or two below her knees. She came to a wet spot, and with what grace she threw her little right hand around and grasped her skirts—not exactly lifting them, but gathering them in—so neatly and nicely. It was worth gold to see the wee thing act with such grace.

In matters of prudence, the best thoughts are last. In matters of conscience, first thoughts are best.

## Literary.

### IS THE NINETEENTH CENTURY FAVORABLE TO GREAT POETS?

"As imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name."

The greatest of poets has well described his art in these lines. Here lies the secret of our poverty in this branch of literature. Men in this age have not the opportunity to give free play to the imagination that our predecessors had. We know and think a great deal more than they did; and our knowledge has tended to make us value hard, common sense above high imaginative powers. We do not pay much attention to the cultivation of that faculty which is mainly instrumental in giving pleasure, but, instead, give all heed to what is more practical and useful.

It is generally conceded that our age is unfavorable to the production of the best poetry, yet there are some who maintain that we can have as great poets now as well as in other ages, and that their scarcity is owing not to the character of our times, but to some accidental causes. It shall be our object in these pages to enquire into the actual state of affairs, and to present a few arguments why the nineteenth century should be unfavorable to great poets.

If we glance backwards in the history of any nation, we will find that its first attempts at literature have invariably been in verse. Our own English commences with the *Beowulf*, an epic of over six thousand lines. Latin and Greek literature exhibit the same poetic beginnings, and the classics furnish abundant testimony to the excellence and purity of the early Greek and Latin poets. Going back still further, and prying still deeper into the secrets of the dark ages, we find numerous monuments which prove that the literature, historic, dramatic and devotional, of these primitive races, was altogether poetic. Full 2,000 years before the advent of a Saviour on earth proclaimed the salvation of man, the mighty spirit Ormuzd was worshipped through the symbol of fire, and the hymns of the *Zend Avesta*, rich with poetic and religious fervor, record the mystic rites and ceremonies performed by their priests in their sacred capacity. The language of the *Vedas*, the sacred dialect of Brahmanism, the Sanskrit, both show the same poetic characteristics, and, coming to the Persian we find the same evidence of an early poetical career in the *Shah Nameh* of Ferdusi, a true national epic, grand in extent, noble in style and varied in contents.

We might go on into the examination of other languages, but enough have been cited to furnish abundant illustration of our point. And now, since the ancients all excelled in poetry thus early in their career, we ask the question, Can we, the enlightened races of the nineteenth century, produce poetry equal to theirs?

We read a short sketch from the *London Eclectic Review* not long ago, in which its author ridiculed the idea that the age of poetry was over, and declared himself confidently expecting the "Tenth Avatar of Genius" to establish the Muse again upon the throne. His chief argument appears to be this: men's passions are the great motive power in the construction of poetry; the ancients loved, hated, feared, and wrote poetry; we love, hate, and fear: *ergo*, we can write just as good poetry as they did.

The fallacy in this argument is in the conclusion. We grant that the passions of men form the great moving power in poetry; we grant that these passions were prominent in the ancients, but the argument no longer holds. We do, indeed, possess the passions of love, hate, and fear; we write poetry, so-called, but we assert that these passions were much more strongly developed with the ancients, and acted under much more favorable circumstances with them than they do with us. They had no high state of civilization to keep them in check. Unrestrained by the curbing influences of refinement, these passions were allowed free play, and naturally sought expression in poetry, as the garb most suitable for the portrayal of passion. On the other hand, the passions of a highly cultivated race have become a subject power. They are held within certain limits by the check which a high state of refinement imposes upon them. Social laws have been enacted, and every influence is brought to bear upon them in order to keep them within bounds.

Hence, since these powers which develop poetry have been kept in confinement so long, they have become dwarfed, to a certain extent, and man no longer soars in the wild and fanciful nature of poetic imagery, but descends to plain, matter-of-fact prose.

Another argument on the affirmative side of the question is based on the old quotation from Horace, "*Poeta nascitur, non fit*." If the poet is born, not made, then, according to the laws which regulate the growth of mankind, there should be more poets now than in olden times, when the number of men was so much smaller. And if the number of poets is increased, the number of great ones must be increased in the same ratio.



We think the same arguments which we applied to the passions will apply here. Even if the number of men born with the qualifications and powers of a poet is greater now than in the dark ages, still we assert that if the associations of our times are directly opposed to the development of these powers, very few of these men will ever rise to distinction in this department, for, although the thought of Horace is true to a certain extent, yet we think it needs some qualification in our day. Nature by herself can never produce a great poet.—Labor is necessary for success in this pursuit as in all others.

The champions of this argument in favor of poetic excellence in our day maintain it with a surprisingly weak statement. They say, that by the laws which govern the progress of the human race, we should have more great poets now than they had in ancient times. They admit that this is not the case, but satisfy themselves by saying that because we have no great poets just now, it is no reason why we should never again have them, and that while poetry does appear to be in such a feeble condition at present, yet soon it will revive, and in a short time some star will rise in the poetic firmament which will eclipse in brightness and glory all that ever preceded it. They admit that we have no really great poets now; history shows us that they have been on the decline ever since a high state of civilization commenced; yet they prophesy for the future, and advance theories entirely antagonistic to all the laws of human progress. Like causes produce like results, and since the advance of civilization has always been the decline of poetry, we must infer that these same laws will continue to act, and tend to extinguish rather than revive poetry.

They tell us that man has more to inspire him now than he had during the dark ages. The greatest wars, the most terrible battles have taken place within our era. Knowledge has made attainments unknown to the ancients; the sciences have made the most wonderful discoveries; the mysteries and phenomena of the physical world have been explained; all of which is eminently calculated to excite the poet's ambition, and inspire him with the loftiest sentiments. Ought we not to write poetry under these favorable circumstances?

But we still maintain that a high state of civilization is not favorable to poetry. Science has accomplished wonders for the advancement of the interests of man, but these interests are of a practical nature. Our knowledge is increased, and we are filled with wonder and admiration at the truths which are presented us. But knowledge is dangerous to poetry. While our ideas are associated with mystery; while our thoughts wander over dark and unknown grounds; while our knowledge is oppressed by superstition and fear, then our imagination works upon the vague and undefined field before us, and poetry of a high order is the result: but when the light of knowledge breaks through the gloom, the clouds of superstition dissolve, the outlines of objects become more and more distinct, and we behold them in their true aspect; they are plainly visible, fully comprehended, not mystified by obscurity; then the hues and lineaments of the shadowy forms, wrought out by the poet's imagination, develop into the real, well-defined

thought, and, instead of lofty, poetical strain, we have plain and simple prose.

Some people, in their argument on this question, reason from the progress of the experimental sciences. They notice the advancement which these have made, and would apply the same reasoning to the progress of the imitative arts; but the difference is readily seen: the former improve by slow degrees; ages are spent in accumulating and arranging material: each generation takes up the mass as it is left them, makes its contributions to the whole, and this is transmitted to the next generation for further donations. Thus, the first experiments lie under great disadvantages, while their followers profit by their experience, and succeed far better. It is not so with painting, sculpture or poetry. The progress of refinement does not furnish these arts with better material for imitation. It may improve the instrument which the painter and sculptor have to use, but the poet uses no instrument save language, and this is best suited for his purpose in its rude state. Hence, when language becomes highly polished and cultivated, it is not well adapted to poetry as prose, and we see it declining in proportion to the rapidity of their growth, instead of improving along with the sciences.

They tell us that the immense field for poetry found in the external universe still offers the poetical mind inexhaustible stores of material, the same mountains rear their lofty heads in rugged grandeur to the clouds; the same mighty ocean beats with sullen roar upon our shores; the same noble rivers sweep over our continent; everywhere we find a wealth of material—and cannot the nineteenth century make use of this abundant supply?

True, we have rugged mountains, springing upwards to the clouds; we have the mighty ocean, gentle and calm at times, at times lashed into fury; we have great rivers marching with majestic tread to the sea, or bursting with impetuous foaming through our mountain passes, yet, we repeat, the nineteenth century cannot produce a great poet. We do not wish to rob nature of her attraction. We love to ramble in some narrow gorge and listen to the prattling mountain stream as its falls plashing from rock to rock, and dances merrily down the vale; we love to look down from some tall cliff upon the mountain torrent as it whirls through some narrow defile, and finally plunges with thundering roar down some steep precipice: we love to climb the rugged mountain side, and from its lofty summit look down upon the varied scene below us, or "wander on the seabeat shore," and look out over the boundless ocean with its swelling billows and foaming breakers. We admit that these are great and glorious privileges. We feel that we should like always to dwell apart from the busy haunts of man, and spend our lives in sweet communion with nature; but suppose we try it. One day's fast would make us very willing to give up our romantic notions, and we would readily consent to return to the realities of life. How can we write poetry when everything tends to detract from the poetry of our surroundings? We linger in some beautiful valley with tall mountains rising one above another on every side, and we are inspired by the grandeur of the scenery about us—a few steps, and we stumble unexpectedly upon a dilapidated

house with a few acres of stump land surrounding it, while the old farmer is ploughing with a mule and a steer hitched together, and his dirty, half-naked children make war on the stump, or stand and stare stupidly at the passing stranger. Our inspiration is gone, and we feel we are still within the pale of homely reality. *This* is the rustic farm-house we read about; *these* the bonny, rosy-cheeked mountain lasses, always represented as models of beauty.

To the ancients, the ocean was the abode of terror and mystery. Their imagination peopled it with horrid phantoms and evil spirits of all kinds, and they firmly believed that whoever should venture far from shore would be carried off never to return. Tremendous giants stood in prominent places ready to destroy; fearful spectres were seen in the troubled clouds, grasping the lightnings in their hands and waving back the adventurous mariner. It was the scene of untold horrors and furnished a rich mine of poetic ore for the ancients; but now, how different! Every boundary is well known. The very bottom has been explored. Telegraphic cables pass beneath its depth, and connect with distant countries. Steamships cross and recross in every directions. Sails dot its surface, more numerous than the seabirds, and we behold it as the grand highway for intercourse between nations, yet still beautiful, still mighty, it does not possess one-thousandth part of the poetic attractions for us as it did for the ancients.

The simple child of nature, brought up amid the wilds of the forest, breathed an atmosphere of poetry. The warblings of birds, the gentle purling of the brook, the rustling of the leaves, all spoke to his untutored mind in the language of poetry and with true poetic soul, he called it the voice of the Great Spirit.

The fragrant zephyrs, as they floated by, bore the whispers of an approving Manitou; but when the tempest roared through the forest and bent the mighty oaks before its fury, it was the voice of an angry God, and the awe-stricken savage bowed with reverential fear before the wrath of the Great Spirit. It was a true poetic sentiment that caused him to name our great river the "Father of Waters;" and, whether chasing the deer along its banks or paddling his bark canoe on its broad surface, it was hallowed by the traditions of his forefathers. The Great Spirit moved in silence over its waters, and at night its depths gave forth the sweetest music.

How changed everything now! The red man no longer hunts the deer within sound of its flow. Its banks are teeming with civilization. Large cities dot both sides, while its surface is alive with craft of every description—clumsy steamboats, ungainly lumber vessels, hideous flats, rafts, etc. The white man with his arts and sciences has driven away the sons of the forest and the beautiful Mississippi is no longer the abode of poetry and inspiration, but the channel for a nation's commerce. Its poetry departed with the red man and his Manitou.

Thus we see the effect of civilization upon poetry. The two cannot exist together. True, we have very good verse at times, but that high order of conception which constitutes poetry in its purest and most elevated character is entirely wanting as the production of



our age. Our times are too scientific, too mechanical, too practical to nourish poetry.

Men look with contempt on whatever is visionary, and turn their whole attention towards the profitable. Man has discovered that he is machine, and he does everything by machinery.

Rule and system are applied on every hand, and practical common sense is the power which moves it all. Poetry cannot be made by machine, and therefore it has been laid aside.

"LAURIE."

The *Atlanta Constitution* says:

"A Wisconsin man, who had been induced by Western papers to go to Florida and invest in an orange grove, passed through Atlanta on his way home yesterday. His breeches were harnessed to him by one suspender, and he stood up to a free-lunch counter with the air of a man who knew his rights and dared maintain them."

We know a man who owns a Florida grove, and when he reads this story, he will say he don't believe it. But the *Atlanta Constitution* can't lie, and besides the editor of it stood next to the one-suspender(ed) man at the free-lunch counter, and registered every oath he uttered against Florida orange groves. There was 27½ of them. The quarter was caused by a break in the flow of discourse when the chunk of bread was too overgrown for his mouth.

[The following interesting letter was addressed us—we cannot surrender the honor to Friend R.—by a young lady who recently honored our College with a visit.—ED.]

Accompanied by the gallant Mr. Goodwin and a lady friend, we, yesterday, paid a visit to Richmond College. We were met at the door by Mr. —, whose very polite attendance on the occasion added greatly to our entertainment. We went first to the Museum, where Mr. —, with a ready facility, pointed out the various objects of interest, explaining their previous history, associations, &c. Thus in fancy we were transported to the most distant regions of the earth, and to the scenes and events which had so often before excited our youthful imagination. In one grand panoramic view we beheld, as it were, the fens of Africa, the jungles of China, where starting from every nook and fane are the innumerable deities which excite fear and devotion in the breast of superstitious man, and to the distant rivers of the Pacific slope, whose waters roll through vast solitudes, unbroken save by the war-whoop of the savage denizen of the Western empire. It was the first time we had ever stood in the presence of royalty and gazed upon the relics of a civilization which has passed away with the glory and grandeur of the East. And, strange as it may seem, we must confess that while we silently viewed the form of the Egyptian Princess, we felt thankful that embalming was a lost art, and that "our dead" could be embalmed only in living, human hearts, that were stirred by the hopes of an immortality far more glorious than any the ancients had ever dreamed of. But our hearts were the more deeply

thrilled by the sight of the memorials gathered from the land we denominate as holy, and which has been forever consecrated by the presence of God manifest in the flesh. A crown of thorns from Olivet. Ah! how in thought we wandered to that other and similar crown which man, in mockery and derision, wove for the brow of Him in whom dwells all the fullness of glory and majesty! We went afterwards to the pleasant and comfortable halls in which the various literary societies of the College hold their meetings. Each of them is adorned with the painting of the Roman Forum—that place of immortality, where so often Rome's mighty orators have swayed vast multitudes by the magic power of "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." May the students of Richmond College imitate the example of those mighty ancients who gained the applause of listening senates, and whose grand persuasive eloquence has been reverberating through all the ages, while so many other oracles of reason and truth have been silenced forever.

But what pleased us most in these halls were the pictures of our own Lee and Jackson. In them the saintly and the chivalrous ideals have been blended and embodied in a better age and a nobler civilization than Rome ever knew, though she revolutionized the world by her prowess and her arts, and made her name the one grand thought of the centuries.

We at length ascended to the Tower. There a scene of almost magical beauty met our sight. Turning our faces eastward we beheld Richmond rising from among her seven hills like a pearl of exquisite loveliness from the crown of some gorgeous Eastern monarch. Far to our right glimmered the blue waters of the James, while beyond was Manchester, the smaller gem in this diadem of beauty and grandeur. Strange thoughts stirred our hearts as we gazed around us. We felt the inspiration of the scene and the hour, and we could have knelt, our faces to the East, with all the idolatrous devotion that characterizes the most devout follower of the false Prophet. After descending many flights of steps we at length reached the lower part of the building. Here we took leave of our kind escort, and in company with our young friends wended our way slowly back to the noisy, bustling crowd we had left behind us in the city. P. B. A.

For the spicy manner in which the local matter has been written, we are under lasting obligations to Mr. W. W. FIELD.

It requires considerable facility of expression, as well as versatility of talent to write good "locals," and all will agree with us that, in that respect, the present numbers is unsurpassed.—[ED.]

## EXCHANGES.

The *Sibyl* is a bright monthly, from the "Elmira Female College." Its contents speaks well for the literary culture of the Institution. Such topics as "The Crisis of History" and "Writers of Fiction as Reformers" are treated, and treated in thoughtful manner.

The May issue of *The Campus* reaches us from Alleghany College. It floats the motto

"*Inter Silvas Academiae Querimus Verum.*" This is a better spot to seek it than around cherry trees. We have advanced since the days of Washington.

The *Virginia University Magazine* in April issue discusses the subject of "English Dithyrambic Poetry" as fully as a brief essay can.

The *Educational Journal* publishes in its May issue the first portion of Prof. Thomas R. Price's Inaugural Address, delivered before the Greek class of the University of Virginia. The subject treated is "The Method of Philology." We advise every student at Richmond College, who wishes to be inspired with a love for Philological studies, especially with a love for the Greek, to read carefully this most able address.

The *College Journal*, from Georgetown College, is a very gem in typographical appearance, and first class as to contents. "Voluminous Writers" indicate study and sense.

The *Institute Journal* reaches us from Henderson, Tenn. We read with interest "The Choice of Hercules;" a translation from the Greek. It gives us this bit of verse and advice from Francis:

"A youth who hopes the Olympic prize to gain  
All arts must try and every toil sustain;  
The extremes of heat and cold must often prove,  
And shun the weakening joys of wine and love."

As to the joys of wine, we have no part in them, but—

Other exchanges received are "*The Jewell*," *Southern Collegian*, *Furman Collegian*, *Roanoke Collegian*, *College Mirror*, *College Record*, *University Review*, *The Home Journal*, *Rural Messenger*, *Religious Herald*, *High School*, *Acanthus*, *Fuller & Co.'s Monthly*, *Gray Jacket*, *Dew Drop*, *Amateur*, *Earlhamite*, *Trinity Collegian*, *Golden Sheaf*.



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## MONTHLY MUSINGS.

RICHMOND COLLEGE, RICHMOND, VA.

JOHN W. SNYDER, Richmond, Va., } Edit  
M. A. TURNER, Richmond, Va., }

Communications solicited from the students and friends of the College. No anonymous articles will be inserted.

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No. 3.

## ON THE ORDER AND METHOD OF STUDIES.

It cannot be expected that within the narrow limits of an editorial, such a subject should be as thoroughly dealt with as its importance demands, but only that the most salient points be presented.

In the first place, it will be most appropriate to consider what is meant by the faculties as they are involved in the discussion, giving the normal order of their development, and then the branches best adapted to each, including methods suited to each pursuit or branch. If anything has been fully treated of by psychologists, and viewed in all its aspects, it is this question of what is meant by faculty. It is universally conceded that the faculties do not stand out in bold relief apart from each other, marking out the limit at which one act ends, and another begins, but that, like all things else, they are intermingled with each other. They are acts of the intellect: at one time perception predominates; at another, memory; at another, thought.

The faculties, as Hamilton divides them, are the presentative, re-presentative, and elaborative—in the natural order of development.

Now the methods of studies which appears the most appropriate, the most philosophical, as well as the most practical, is that which follows this order, thus conforming in its teaching to the well-regulated rules of nature. This seems the *common-sense* plan. Of course it could not be said that a study which brings into active use the perceptive faculty, exercises the others in no degree whatever, for observation and personal experience affirm that one faculty ~~must~~ be to some extent in operation, while the other is at its highest point of development.

As we are in a world of objects, and have to do with that world first, it is a logical inference that that faculty by which these objects are cognized should be the first to spring into action, viz: the preservative, and in order that we may re-cognize the objects, the representative is developed, and finally, the elaborative faculty—elaborative because it works over, fills knowledge formerly gained,

invests it with a new interest, looks at it from a different standpoint, thus serving as a fitting climax to such a gradual development. The knowledge that was gained through the others by means of local relations, this last classifies systematically and philosophically.

This gradual growth of all minds—for there is no exception—should at least offer *some* method by which a line of study may be marked out and pursued so that the intellect may, under proper guidance, attain a higher aim and purpose than it could without these principles. Both practice and theory should be consulted in accomplishing such a design. That man is not the most successful in medicine who relies entirely on either practice or theory, but he who happily combines them both. The arborist from what he has learned theoretically, and through the channels of experience, knows what will most conduce to the shapely growth of the tree—he combines the two, and nature helps herself. It is the same case in studies; it only becomes the duty of those who have searched the question philosophically, and have brought to their aid the most extended experience, to unfold and apply a method appropriate to nature's consistent development. Do that, and here again nature will help herself.

Those studies should be first pursued which bring into exercise the power of sense-perception. To this end, spelling should be first taught, such easy, simply words being used as are names of familiar objects, and by degrees going from the known to the unknown; in this case explained by object lessons and pictorial illustration. It will be readily seen that there will be a slight exercise of the imagination, and to some extent memory. Then reading, in short, simple lessons, easily comprehended by the mind of the learner. As a method of shaping the imagination to more elevating conceptions, selections from eminent authors—poets especially—for recital should be encouraged. Next, primary geography should be taken up in connection with primary history, carefully learning the facts and dates as a means of strengthening the memory, and in connection with this last some arithmetic; at this point, it may be said that the rise from the concrete to the abstract becomes more apparent, consequently the objective system judiciously applied will render the abstract more comprehensible. The objective should not, however, be carried to an extreme, as is done in what is termed the Kindergarten system, over which its advocates go into ecstasies—we might almost say, fanaticism. In such methods much valuable time is uselessly spent “in exercising the powers of observation.” There is such a thing as making anything too easy, and that leads to this gross error. It is essen-

tially necessary that, at this stage, the imagination and memory be cultivated as a step to higher studies, and *that* method to a great extent prevents it.

Man does not always have to do with the objective; the more he develops, the less he should depend upon it; for in following a line of reasoning through all its logical intricacies, there is need that analytic thought be in especial exercise, and unless he has been gradually trained to that exercise, futile will be his efforts in that direction, when the reasoning powers should be brought into use. So the objective should gradually give way to the higher processes as the mind becomes more developed.

Grammar that is plain, simple and practical, should next be taught in connection with the previous studies, and then a review of them all should be made, the geography being supplemented by globes, maps, and frequent exercise in map drawing, the whole giving a good, local memory, which is the essential requisite to learning geography: thus the memory is exercised while the perceptive faculty is in its high state of development—the one acting as the complement of the other in the studies at this stage, which now go along *pari passu*. Now, since the powers of representation are next in order of development, the memory should be exercised to its utmost capacity, not forced to efforts that would be directly antagonistic to nature; for the mind, overburdened, becomes weak, staggers under the duty imposed, and finally relaxes into a lethargy from which it would never recover; at the same time thought is slightly developed.

After sufficient advancement has been made in the above mentioned studies, the languages should be begun. If the modern branch is to be learned so as to speak it, it should be studied at this stage; if not, the ancient languages, particularly the Latin, the forms of which should be thoroughly mastered—serving as a drill exercise to the mind, and at the same time fixing in the memory the groundwork of the subject in hand. These are indelibly impressed upon every one's mind who has been properly trained in the languages, and will be remembered long after nice distinctions, and subtleties of construction, yea, even after words and the commonest expressions will have faded from memory, although the forms were the very first learned, and those forgotten, the last acquired.

The languages and mathematics should now keep pace with each other, and since the elaborative faculty is now more fully used, and begins to view subjects from a different standpoint, examine them in their various phases, subjecting everything to accurate analysis



and logical synthesis, the former should be studied again critically and philosophically in connection with the higher mathematics, philosophy, &c. Other relations, other classifications should now unite into a rounded whole all knowledge formerly gained by local relations.

Thus there is a gradual rise from the simple to the complex, from the concrete to the abstract, in conformity with that plan so wisely ordained by nature. The modern method of using the reasoning powers of the young learner in everything, in dissecting, and placing apart the several constituent elements of a subject for calm, thoughtful consideration, has a fault in that it is contrary to this gradual unfolding of the mind, and uses it as a hot-house plant, developing it by artificial means, not permitting it to bloom and bring forth fruit in nature's own good time. If such a pernicious system is persistently adhered to, we may well entertain fears for the future of our race.

Herbert Spencer, in a treatise on education, in which he aims at the establishment of principles, says, in speaking of the system enunciated by Pestalozzi, that "there is a certain sequence in which the faculties develop, and a certain kind of knowledge which each requires during its development; and that it is for us to ascertain this sequence and to supply this knowledge"—and the greater students of psychology that those become who have most to do with the supplying of that knowledge, the more towards proficiency will the doctrine of the proper order of studies and methods appropriate to each incline to that long ago maintained by Pestalozzi, which system is the one most beneficial, and will conduce more to the normal acquisition of knowledge, to say nothing of that great American idea, utility.

There is then a law of intellectual progress that we may deduce through observation and actual experience, as well as theory, and by that law arrive at *some* order of studies, although we may know so little of that science which has for its subject the development and intricate workings of the human mind.

Such a law involves "effort and severe discipline severely imposed, and consistently maintained, but the effort and discipline should follow the guidance of nature." M. T.

#### MIND CONCENTRATION.

In our reasonings upon "Education" which appeared in March issue, we reached the conclusion that "Education,"—as to the mind,—meant the full development of our mental powers, and their complete subjection to our control. "Education" signifies not the possession of knowledge, but the development and mastery of ourselves. The educated man is not necessarily the one who *has* accumu-

lated much knowledge, but he is necessarily the one who *can* accumulate it, and that too in the easiest and surest and speediest manner, since his faculties are sharpened and trained, and his powers of application and concentration perfected.

And now suggests itself, that most interesting of questions, "How shall we obtain this order of Education?" A question so interesting, that we are proud to make it the subject of our "Valedictory" in the MUSINGS.

A truly educated man is characterized by the ability of directing all his mind to one point at one time. For the moment he sees, feels, realizes no existence save this "one point." We wish first to show that this is the element of his powers, this is what makes him an educated man. For certainly it evinces *control* of his faculties, and supposes or assures *development* of those faculties.

"But he cannot translate an Ode of Horace?" your interrogatively answer, the interrogation being in the suppressed but implied thought, "And would you term this man educated?" But because he is ignorant of the Chinese tongue you doubt not his education. Let the man of concentrated mind turn his attention to Latin. Now we learn the play and strength of his disciplined powers. He is *devoted* to the study. He is not in a state of semi-activity and semi-rest, but all activity, his mind fully alive, and more than this, his mind fully directed now to this point, now to that, now to learning this word's etymology, now to fathoming that grammarian's view. And he remembers these "words." Why? Because, as laid down by all writers upon mental philosophy, the way to cultivate memory, is to observe closely; in other words, study intensely, concentrate the mind. It is claimed that when we memorize we actually make certain "impressions" upon the lobes of the brain. There can be no question that if the first impressions are forcibly made they can be the more easily recalled. One of our Professors even maintains that what one *knows* he can never forget. Be this as it may, our educated man learns "words" and "rules" to remember them. But not alone does he remember the fundamental rules of syntax, he so has concentrated his mind upon them as to see them in their full and true light, and not alone, is therefore enabled to use them as well-understood tools, but can build other rules upon them, and handle them in the boldest and most advantageous manner. It is safe to affirm that one with this training at the start could accomplish more in a six months' course of study than an ordinary scholar in a four year's course. Whilst the accuracy of his scholarship would be of a nature which a slovenly pupil would *never* attain. Why we have met

no examples of this kind is because men come to college to obtain mind discipline, and not with it.

We have then learnt that the power of mind-concentration is the power that makes all things possible to the scholar, and is the element of strength in an educated man. If it *only* enabled us to remember what we had thought we learnt, it would seem a golden key unlocking golden treasures. We have often thought we would feel supremely happy to remember one-tenth what we read, for it is wonderful how much an ordinary reader scans every day. Now we might remember one-tenth, if we should only read that tenth, and with ten times our ordinary "earnestness." And why do we not? Can we doubt our own doctrine? The explanation probably is, that the mind shrinks from intense mental application, as surely as the body recoils before oppressing physical labor, or the soul wavers in the presence of high moral duty. It seems ever the rule that the most precious possessions must be bought with the highest tributes. "No cross, no crown," alike in the mental and spiritual world.

We now approach a closer consideration of our leading question, "How shall we obtain true education?" We have partially answered this, in seeing how the man of disciplined powers would study Latin. We cannot study this way, for this world suppose we were educated, but we can make this "order" of study our model, and approach our *beau-ideal* as rapidly, continually and perseveringly as possible. At the best it would require years of mental toil to discipline our powers to follow the highest abstract reasonings of Newton and La Place, but what would then be ours?

If we are ready to pay the price of the possession some of us must begin to study Greek and Mathematics in a different manner than at present. We think it an excellent plan before opening the book, to consider a moment or two the value of the special study, and to work ourselves into an enthusiasm over the language or science in hand. If we are about to read Cicero let us alone think of the beauties of the Latin tongue and the genius of Rome's greatest orator. Let all other considerations be excluded, live for the time alone within the Roman world of letters. Then with the greatest vim begin the work. You are *in medias res* immediately, and possibly involved directly in a long and intricate sentence. Now you feel discouraged. But remember your motto is, "Mind-Concentration." You are not supposed to have time to grow discouraged, or to think of discouragement. 'Tis enough that the unravelling of a "hard" sentence does one more real benefit in every way, as mental discipline and in giving knowledge, than the



reading of easy sentences. But better not think of even this at the time. You might well have considered it before you opened the book, but now you must put your *whole* mind upon the special, particular one, individual, sole work of translating this line, now that; for your main aim is to learn the one lesson of "Mind Concentration."

The most intricate problems in languages or sciences are the aggerate of a number of comparatively simple "points." Bring your mind to consider these "points," one at a time, and hold your mind to each "point" until that "point," is mastered. And by this we do not mean that one should merely conquer one stronghold before passing to another, and yet in the conquest yawn and dream and idle away as much time as one chooses, for to dally in the presence of an inimical "point" is as dangerous to one's mental welfare, as for an army to approach a battery at a funeral pace; like that army one must charge it, live for that "point" alone, know nothing else.

At first this order of study will appear most painful and wearisome. You cannot continue it long at a time. But do not grow tired too easy. Many have a way of believing themselves weary, when they are not weary, but only lazy. It is wonderful how much labor the mind can perform. And so return to the work. In time you can think longer, more intensely, and therefore so much the more successfully. And this success will encourage you to press on with the greater ardor. Whilst your knowledge of the special study in hand will increase with a rapidity that will give you time to enter deeper and deeper into the study of the language. To one thus systematically trained, and thus earnestly working, all things grow simple. For the most difficult studies are alone a combination of simple facts and relations, and as soon as we learn to take the enemy in detail, and put all our mind here and then there, we solve the problem. Says Professor Price, "All knowledge is the result of simple processes infinitely multiplied."—Consider the "processes" one after another.

Continues the Professor, "If our knowledge be accurate and scientific, it is needful that the observations themselves be trustworthy and precise. The power of observation, the power of seeing things as they are, and of detecting the precise point of agreement, and of difference between things, is, beyond a doubt, the most valuable and potent agency of the human mind. It is the foundation of all science." And who can possibly make observations, so close in kind, so precise, so numerous, so thorough, as our man of education? And Prof. Price affirms, as Bacon long ago affirmed, that the grandest sciences are built upon mere observations.

Newton, in the maturity of his powers, modestly explained that he owed his success, not to the natural greatness of his faculties, but because he was able to concentrate those faculties. And again we repeat, to obtain this power should be the highest aim of the one seeking education.

J. S.

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## Locals.

PHILOLOGIAN HALL, April 13, 1877.—The Society met at the usual hour, and after the customary opening exercises, Mr. Davies moved that the Society pass the head of "Installation of Officers," whereupon the officers were duly installed. By motion, the Society then resumed the regular order of exercises.

First Declaimer—Mr. Reamey.

First Reader—Mr. Cosby.

Second Declaimer—Mr. Robertson.

Second Reader—Mr. Cone, (absent).

The question, "Resolved, That the Treatment of Militiades was Just," was ably discussed by Messrs. Satterwhite, B. W. N. and J. M. Simms. Holland, Huff and Prof. Harris for the affirmative, and Messrs. Ryals, Caillett, Cosby, Carney, Bailey, Derieux and Robertson for the negative. The question was decided in favor of the negative by a vote of 17 to 3. Critic's report was then received, and the Society proceeded with the regular order of exercises. Mr. George E. Chiles, of Manchester, Va., was unanimously elected to active membership of the Society. Under the head of "New Business," the following was unanimously adopted:

"Resolved, That it is the duty of each and every member of this Society to patronize those who advertise in the MONTHLY MUSINGS."

The Society then proceeded to regular adjournment.  
SOL. CUTCHINGS, Critic.

PHILOLOGIAN HALL, May 11, 1877.—The Society met at the usual hour, with the Vice-President in the chair.—After the opening exercises the First Declamation was delivered by Mr. Herndon.

First Reader—Mr. Bell.

The Classic Gem was read by the Scribe.

Second Reader—Mr. D. A. Burgess.

Second Declaimer—Mr. J. M. Simms.

Debate being next in order, the question, "Should Mormonism be tolerated by the United States?" was discussed affirmatively by Messrs. Caillett, Robertson, Burgess, D. A.; Powers, Goodwin, Cosby, and Macmanaway; negatively by Messrs. Carney, Burnett, Davis, Simms, J. M., and Snyder.

The vote was taken and the question decided in the negative.

After the ordinary business transaction, the Society adjourned.

Gas—8 burners, 4½ hours—cost 40½ cents.

SOL. CUTCHINGS, Critic.

APRIL 20, 1877.—The Society met. President in the chair. An autograph letter of General R. E. Lee was presented to the Museum through the Society by Dr. J. Wm. Jones, and a vote of thanks returned to the donor. After the usual business debate ensued on the question, "Does Hope exert a greater influence than Fear?" The question was decided in the negative by a small majority. Arrangements were made for a Public Debate.

After the transaction of other business, the Society adjourned.  
R. H. PITT, Critic.

APRIL 27, 1877.—The night was taken up in discussing business motions and arranging for the various elections. Various committees were appointed, and after an interesting session, the Society adjourned.

R. H. PITT, Critic.

MU SIGMA RHO HALL, May 11, 1877.—The Society was called to order by the Vice President, Mr. J. Howard Gore. G. Morgan Shott read in place of O. E. Jones. Declamation by A. E. Long. Monthly oration by Mr. Moore. Subject: "Acquisition of Knowledge." The question for debate was, "Resolved, That the city is a better place for a College than the country." Discussed affirmatively by Messrs. Peele, Cabell, Williams, Tupper, Price, and Fleet. Negatively by Messrs. Woodward, Davis and Abbott. Decided in favor of affirmative by a vote of 8 to 7.  
W. W. BROWN, Critic, pro tem.

With the brilliant exercises of the evening of April the 19th, the Philologists celebrated the initiation of a new era in the annals of their Society. They met to rejoice over a valuable addition to the present and rapidly increasing beauty of their hall, a bust of Houdon's Washington by Valentine, donated by one of their former fellow-members, and most enthusiastic well-wishers, Mr. R. B. Lee, of this city. The exercises opened with a charming and instructive lecture upon the "Telephone," by Prof. Charles H. Winston, in which, with the assistance of a able corps of young physicists and skillful Telegraph-operators of the Society, he introduced numerous and interesting experiments.

After the lecture the audience was invited to the Society Hall to witness the ceremony of unveiling the statuaty. Mr. B. W. N. Simms, as chairman of the Hall Furnishing Committee, through whom the bust was presented, made a pretty speech of presentation, and was followed by Mr. J. W. Snyder, in a short speech of acceptance and thanks in behalf of the Society, delivered with his characteristic grace and wit.

We hope that the old members, whom our College Society have sent forth to the battle of Life, will not forget the organization to which they are so much indebted, and will speedily follow this praiseworthy example.

A PUBLIC DEBATE was held, under the auspices of the Mu Sigma Rho Society, in College Chapel, May 4, 1877, commencing at 8 o'clock. Quite a good audience assembled at an early hour. The exercises consisted of a declamation by Mr. L. F. Whittle, followed by debate on the question, "Ought Foreign Immigration to be Encouraged by the Government?" Discussed affirmatively by Messrs. Riggan and Pitt—negatively by Messrs. Taylor and Biting. After the debate, Messrs. Curry, Fleet and Haynes read a selection from Merchant of Venice.

All who participated acquitted themselves well. The debaters were up to their usual standard, and the repartee at the close of the debate between Messrs. Pitt and Biting was enjoyed specially.

THE reputation of one of our Professors is so great that many of the citizens of Virginia insist upon his nomination for Governor. The students, anxious to see their instructor elected, enthusiastically opened the summer campaign a few evening since. The proceedings were as follows:

Not a whisper was heard, but deafening shout,  
As to the chairman's office we were wending,  
Not a student forgot what he was about,  
While a speech from his Honor demanding.

Not a sign, not a look, nor a word did he make  
In return for the respect we paid him;  
But he sat still, and as silent as a stake,  
With "Scrutator's" wrecks around him.

But half of our reckless task was done  
Of demanding a speech from the Governor (?)  
When it was generally whispered around  
Of the nearness of our Grecian Professor.

Few and pointed we e the words that he said,  
And they not at all entertaining;  
Then we steadfastly thought of the recompense paid  
For "Gubernatorial campaigning."

Slowly and dismally we left his abode,  
Chagrin'd and feeling quite blue-ry;  
We raised not a shout, we said not a word,  
But left him alone in his fury. CLAUDE.

The above was handed to us by one of Cottage A.'s most talented occupants, who was an eye-witness of and participator in the events so vividly described. If the students continue to be treated in this manner they will most probably turn their powerful (?) influence in favor of a more affable candidate.

It is astonishing to see with unblushing effrontery some students, when called on to explain an absence from lecture, sling out, "Had an examination yesterday;" when in truth being unable to stand the examination they had taken holiday.

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SCENE ON SECOND FLOOR.—Mr. J. "Get out of my room, sir!" (Throws a glass of water into Mr. M.'s face.) Mr. M., somewhat surprised, and begs for "No violence, gentlemen." "You poltroon! You vagabond! You unmitigated lickspittle! Get out of my room, sir!" (They fight. Friends rush in.) Mr. M. stops, trying to swallow Mr. J. in order to explain. Mr. J. obtains his dipper and breaks it over Mr. M.'s head. (They fight. Friends separate them.) Exeunt omnes.

Scene second.—In Mr. M.'s room. Mr. M., with a knot on his left temple as big as a hen-egg, soliloquizes, "The scoundrel, to hit me on my head when I wasn't observin'! Give me my stick. I wish I could get to him, I'd chaw him right up!" (Stamps the floor and grinds his teeth, and white with rage, runs to seek Prof. Puryear.) Curtain falls.

THE measles have succeeded the mumps, and seem inclined to show themselves well-worthy of such predecessors. Several of the invalids have received cakes from home, of which the local has been prevailed upon to partake, though somewhat scrupulous about depriving the sick. These scruples, however, faded away at sight of the cake, and he 'thanked the Lord and took courage' to have another slice. May we have many such opportunities. Parents will please notice this and regulate themselves accordingly.

Those cows on the campus are becoming a nuisance. It does not better the matter that they are Professor's cows. In general we have great respect for Professors' cows, but these have not been well raised, if we may judge from their behavior, and such associates are trying to the moral character of the students, causing them sometimes to think bad words, if they do not express their thoughts. Therefore, for the moral welfare of the students and the physical good of those cows, let them not tarry long in these hitherto peaceful abodes; otherwise there will be a fuss in the family.

THE sun has at last unveiled his face. How often during the last ten days of cloud and rain have we looked out upon the gloomy prospect, and muttered, with all the stoicism that we could muster, those lines of Bret Harte:

"Hark to the whistling wind!  
The drizzling, pattering rain!  
And it matter not, tho' we never see  
The bright blue sky again."

THOSE who escort young ladies to the Museum should not detract attention from our accomplished exhibitor, or show their ignorance by trying to explain curiosities about which they know nothing.

THE Crittenden trial awakened a good deal of interest in college. One student gave five dollars for the privilege of applauding when the jury returned their verdict of 'Not guilty.'

Now is the time to note and admire the effect of new clothes upon the new students. The ideal student of Richmond College had just obtained a complete suit. Sunday came. He had long wished for it. Boys as well as girls make the church a place to show their lately obtained finery. He arose early, dressed with care, went to church five times, and each time chose a prominent seat. It may be he was happy, may be he enjoyed himself, but to one judging impartially he seemed the most unhappy and the most uneasy man in the whole assembly. Was he conscious? Aye, painfully so. We intimated that he went to church five times. He would have gone oftener, but in the afternoon came up a thunder storm, much to his sorrow. We would advise that brother to lend his new suit to the Local, to have them gracefully broken for him.

CAPTAIN BOBONON, of Richmond, gave a supper on Tuesday evening last, May 1st, the anniversary of his birth, to the literary organizations of this city. The supper was sumptuous, the company young and talented, the speeches animated and witty, and over all shone the kind, generous hospitality of the honored host, which put the guests perfectly at their ease, and made the evening one ever to be gratefully and pleasantly recollected.

The Captain, though differing somewhat from us in political opinions, has, by his kindness, interest and liberality towards the young men of this city, won from them the highest respect and esteem—not to say, love. He seems to take especial interest in literary societies, as he has repeatedly showed by his attention to the societies of our College.

We understand from the Critics that the gas bill of the two Societies for an average month will amount to upwards of \$3.50, which, we are sure, is more than the monthly gas-bill of the entire College. Is it just that these two Societies,—the beauty of whose halls and the interest and attractiveness of the enterprises, which they have originated, are, and will ever be, the chief points of attention to visitors, is it just that these two Societies should pay the gas-bill of the entire College? Is it just that even this amount, small though it may be, should be withdrawn from the embellishment of their halls, the enlargement of their libraries, and their forwarding of their praiseworthy enterprises? We hope that this abuse will be corrected or at least the levy cut down to a reasonable amount.

Two students were strolling on Grace street some time ago, when one stopped in front of a house and said, "Brother B. wouldn't it be funny if I should go up and ring that bell?" "Yes, indeed," said B., "and I will hold the gate open till you get out," and he chuckled in anticipation of seeing the sedate Brother Mac descending those steps with more speed than grace, aided by the boot of the inhabitant. "Well agreed," said Mac, and went up and rang. The door opened. Bro. B. looked in wide-mouthed expectation of seeing the porter kick that Mac man away. But Mac quietly entered and in a moment more, appeared at the parlor window with a lady friend, laughingly pointing out to her the dumb-founded Bro. B. Bro. B. gazed on in mute astonishment, and as he took in the true situation, his face assumed that peculiar smile, popularly known as THE GRINS. Concluding at last that he bid good to be pretty well sold, he took his solitary way toward college a sadder but a wiser man.

ON THE 10th of May there was a dinner given to the Tuckahoe Farmer's Club by their honored president, Prof. B. Puryear, of this College. Judging from the bland, good-humored smiles that played over the faces of the guests, as they sallied forth after dinner to view the effect of scientific farming on the broad acres—4½—of their host, we doubt not that the feast was one that did honor to the hospitality and the taste of our learned professor. Helicon was so fortunate as to have an able representative at the festal board in the person of Mr. A. R. Long.

THE base-ballists of Randolph Macon College show a timidity inconsistent with the excellence of their playing. Having beaten the Richmond College club, which was at a disadvantage, because of the absence of several of its strongest players, they should not allow the fear of a 'beat' to overcome their generosity and courtesy. The Amateur boys appreciate the high merit and ability of the Randolph Mac n College club, and are therefore so much more anxious to be visited by it.

For the Soda Water, Perfumery, &c., call on Jesse Childs, Druggist, 117 W. Main street.

THE contest for the Mu Sigma Rho reader's medal took place in the afternoon of May 10th. After a close and well-sustained contest between numerous aspirants the scales of victory wavered between Messrs. A. P. Staples and R. H. Pitt, and the final decision was deferred until the next day, when the trial resulted to favor of Mr. Pitt. We congratulate the Society on the number and the excellence of its good readers.

IT is very sad to note the decline of the athletic manly sports in our college. But the students are excusable, for they desire to brush up their skill at croquet, in order to play a good game when they go to see their country sweethearts during the rapidly approaching vacation.

VISITORS to the office will please abstain from interrupting the local by applying curse-ry remarks to that gentleman or any other appurtenances of the office. Otherwise the said editor will be under the unpleasant necessity of knocking their physiognomy into pl.

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