

Prof Brant

HAMILTON LIFE.

Vol. II.

CLINTON, N. Y., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1900.

No. 15.

Our Literary Defects.

Any one who has anything to do with the literary compositions of men of this college cannot fail to be impressed by the astonishing ignorance therein manifested with regard to the commonest rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar. We do not believe that the fault is peculiar to Hamilton men; it is widespread, and the result, doubtless, of the present prep school methods and requirements. If there is anything in which a man should be well versed, it is certainly the elementary principles relating to the correct speaking and writing of his mother tongue. The pronunciation of many of the words of our language is still unsettled; but the rules of spelling and punctuation, and especially grammar, have been fixed to a fairly definite degree. There is absolutely no excuse for the neglect of these all-important subjects on the part of either instructor or pupil. And yet the spelling and language of college students is becoming proverbial for its looseness and inaccuracy. Of course, every man is likely to make mistakes; but what is the cause of this prevalent ignorance? For this is a serious question, already recognized as demanding an immediate remedy.

We believe that it is due entirely to the increasing and false importance attached to Latin and Greek—Greek in particular. Students in preparatory schools are rushed through the classics to the neglect of the proper amount of the study of English, all in order to prepare them for the ever-growing requirements of the colleges. A pretence of instruction in the "lower" branches, penmanship, orthography, and grammar, is made in the lower grades; but these are relegated to the background, after a mere smattering of their elementary principles is obtained. We have no statistics at our command to prove these

statements, but we appeal to the personal experience and common sense of every man in college as to the truth of our representations.

The cause, then, is due to the importance attached to Latin and Greek. We are free to say that a comprehensive study of Latin is profitable, for reasons that appear later; but as for Greek, we claim that its position in the curriculum of our schools and colleges is absurdly overestimated. The study of Latin and Greek is productive of certain alleged advantages, according to its advocates; help to the acquisition of an English vocabulary, by reason of the composite character of the English language; intrinsic benefit from the literature read; mental discipline and practice, involved in the act of translation; and, more specifically, advantage derived from information as to mythology, antiquities, etc. Let us see of what value these are, viewed in the light of the present day and its demands.

Of course, from one standpoint, it is a fine thing to take all knowledge for our provinces, and the satisfaction derived from the acquisition of it would, doubtless, be great, though that is problematical. But the present day requires a greater specialization; it demands of the young man certain attainments. The primary and never-failing demand is for a good knowledge of the art of speaking and writing the English language correctly. We see that the advocates of classical study claim for it the power to bring about facility in the above mentioned art. We claim that it has not the power, at least to the extent claimed, or to a degree commensurate with the importance generally attached thereto in the school or college curriculum. Now, inasmuch as nearly half the words in our language are derived directly or indirectly from the Latin, we admit the advantages of Latin with respect to the improvement

and better understanding of vocabulary; and we also admit the value of Latin in certain technical courses. Very few of our words are derived from the Greek, however, and these mostly scientific terms. A very short period of time, therefore, should be devoted to the Hellenic language and literature. As to the benefit derived from the mere reading of the classics, we claim that this may be secured far better from reading a translation into English of the same. No good accrues from the act of translation either. "Translation English" has become proverbial. Translation encourages looseness and slipshod preparation of lessons. We absolutely deny that there is any greater mental discipline in the translation of Latin and Greek to warrant its taking precedence over some other very insignificant branches. It is simply amusing to go into a Latin or Greek recitation in this college, whether it be freshman, sophomore, junior or senior, and hear there the abominable expressions and utterances that are put forward as "English" equivalents of the Latin or Greek. As to the information derived, we say that this can be acquired more rapidly, clearly and satisfactorily from works in English.

The young American of to-day must learn the English language. He must know how to spell, how to punctuate, how to express himself correctly. Some of the most fluent writers in college to-day illustrate to a ludicrous degree, the deficiencies we have spoken of. It would be a great deal better if some of the useless Greek could be cut out of the required course, and in its place substitute something of a more practical value. Tradition doesn't prevail nowadays. We should clamber on board the band wagon of progress.

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Houghton Seminary will be the scene of a German on the evening of February 16th.

Athletic Department.

R. S. C. DRUMMOND, - - - - - Editor
E. J. WARD, - - - - - Reporter

The second basket ball game of the season against the Utica Y. M. C. A. aggregation, showed up our team in a most favorable light, owing to the fact that the team work for which there had been no opportunity in the Waterville game, was given a most satisfactory trial. Despite the fact that when the game was called there were few college men present, the sight of a goodly delegation of Houghton's fair ones, accompanied by Prof. Benedict and a chaperon, gave inspiration to the players, and furnished ample excuse for any slight mistakes on the part of Fritz, Jesse, or the Macs. Davy was officious to a marvelous degree, and it is no wonder that Mott as umpire overlooked several fouls and misdemeanors.

After the preliminary discussion the game was called. Referee Mott at the sound of Doctor Andrew's whistle tossed up the ball, and the battle was on. The first half was a series of brilliant plays by the guards and Jesse, and of magic throws by the two Mac's, who entertained the audience by scoring baskets on the wing from corners and from the center of the floor. About the middle of this half Utica by some mysterious accident threw a basket which was destined to be their first and last. Toward the end of the half the guards and baskets of Hamilton were obliged to summon all their energy to avoid being too frequently interfered with by their Utica opponents. After some sharp playing and the incidental scoring of several more baskets, Stowell announced that there must be a respite, which indeed everyone needed.

At this point the public spirited Mott, assisted by Squire Peet, engrossed the attention of the Houghtonites, and incidentally the spectators by a graphophone concert, during which Mott looked his sweetest, and Peet, needless to say, cut great chunks of congealed moisture. As soon as the graphophone had spied Sousa and the other great artists, Stowell announced that the game would continue, and it did in earnest.

From the first it was plain that Ham-

ilton was beginning to feel the effects of the strain; and as a consequence there were fewer baskets scored in the second half. From the moment Mott tossed the sphere on high, a battle royal raged. Time after time the ball was buried beneath the meshes of legs and arms, until it seemed as if the spectators were beholding a foot ball game instead of basket ball. But this could not continue forever, and consequently Tommy scored a basket. After this feat he decided, for reasons unknown, to leave the field of honor, and Hunter was substituted in his place. Fritz Dunn, at the suggestion of Captain Mac, tried a shot at the basket, and "rung the beast." Rather stunned by this accident, Dunn retreated hastily to his corner. Beyond the scoring of several more baskets by the trio, there was nothing extraordinary connected with the last few minutes of the game. When Stowell called time, the score stood Hamilton 48; Utica 2.

After the game was over the scrub played the varsity a practice game, which was watched by the vanquished Utica men with a feeling of good spirit and a sense of satisfaction. The city team left with expressions of good will, and with assurances of having experienced a pleasant though somewhat disappointing afternoon. There was no kick coming anywhere. The officials were fair, and the playing was clean and gentlemanly. Everything gives us hope for a victory over Little Falls, and then we will be prepared for the coming contest with Cornell. We were glad to observe that Profs. Brandt, Lord and Fitch were interested spectators of the game.

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Athletics—Bric A Brac.

When is Prexy's dinner to the foot ball team?

A few fellows are working at base ball.

The Utica basket ball game was not well patronized.

There is considerable difficulty for the manager of basket ball because basket ball is not in the athletic association.

The evening practices of the basket ball team are worth seeing.

The new basket ball uniforms of black tights and striped jerseys are very pretty.

Some foot ball players say that basket ball is rougher than foot ball.

Waterville Y. M. C. A. seems to fear a return game with us. We ought to have a game here with them.

"Please pay up your basket ball subscriptions," signed Davenport.

Millham and Mason ought to be stirring up their men.

"Uncle" John Crossley has been engaged to coach and train the track team. Good.

Dramatic Club.

Without any doubt this year's club will be as good and as successful as any that has ever gone forth under the appellation of the Hamilton College dramatic club.

In the last few years few trips have been engaged in, but this year the management has arranged quite a few to break the monotony of winter term with its bitter cold one day and slush the next. Great praise is due to Freak for the efforts he has made in arranging dates. We fear only one thing, that we will become so popular and such a drawing card that the New York theaters will want us. We could not oblige them owing to lack of time.

Mr. Hull will give his play first in the Opera House in Clinton on February seventeenth, and once during dance week, probably Wednesday afternoon. "Buck" Fisher has very kindly consented to give a solo or two on the cornet during the performance. Anyone who has for four years lived in north college knows "Buck's" powers on the horn.

After great meditation Mr. Hull has consented to give his play in Waterville on February the twenty-sixth. It is well to note here that Waterville offered more than the Utica Opera House, so they got that night, for in this business as in all others, money makes the mare go. In order to make things run smoothly and have the students thoroughly satisfied, there will be a dance after the performance. Come one, come all.

Mohawk is also among the favored few, and the club plays before them on March second. Scores of other dates are being scheduled, but these only are given for publication. The management hopes the college will support the play when given down town, and knows it will when given in Waterville. Say, but that is a great place—ain't it Shep?

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A College Man.

Many times we hear remarks made by those who have never been to college about "the easy life the boys have there." People look at but one side of college life. Would the humdrum every-day existence of a college man, make an interesting story?

Let us take an average student and follow him in his daily routine of work. Let us not take an immensely popular man nor a "bohner," but a "medium."

John ——— wishes to make his father proud by getting a commencement appointment, his sister happy by playing foot ball, and his mother happy by always being a gentleman in appearance.

He usually awakens about seven, but it takes the inspiring tone of the chapel bell to make him arise. He dresses hurriedly, occasionally glancing at a book, then with his book in his hand he hastens down the hill to get his breakfast. After attending chapel he goes to his first recitation. The hour between the morning recitations is spent partly in glancing over the next lesson, and partly in conversing with some of the fellows, who happen to come in his room. When the second recitation is finished, it is lunch time. A two o'clock recitation necessitates a hurried lunch, and an hour of hard work.

John has an hour now for reading the newspapers and periodicals, or for anything his fancy may dictate. Then comes football practice, which occupies two hours. The dinner hour is at six, and is the only meal during the day to which is given full time and attention. After dinner some meeting usually demands John's attention for at least an hour, after which he returns to his room and settles down for some hours of hard work.

The man in the world is generally through with his labor when the sun sets. Not so with the college man; his work is but half done when the sun sets. College offers no inducements to a lazy man. There is plenty of work to do, and plenty of stimuli to make one do it.

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The Free Illustrated Lecture.

On Wednesday evening, the 31st of January, many of the students listened to a very interesting lecture on the Yellowstone National Park. The lecture was something of a lecture on the Yellowstone National students listened to a very interesting. Everyone enjoyed her talk immensely, and her lantern slides were remarkably fine and beautifully colored, a most difficult feat to accomplish. Few persons in this country have slides equal to hers. We should and do consider ourselves extremely lucky at getting her here, when she has so many calls in all directions at once. One feature of the lecture was that Houghton, or rather the cream of Houghton, was present. Everyone was aware of the fact, for they heard them billing and cooing with their "steaders" in the back seats. Dunn, Henderson, Humeston and Holbrook were there with both feet.

In spite of the hum and buzz made by these loving couples, every one heard distinctly all that was said, and feasted their eyes on the slides to their heart's content. To some the evening's sport was spoiled by not being able to coast down hill. "Life" is sorry to record the fact, yet it feels compelled to, R. H. Sheppard walked down the hill with Miss — and Prof. Benedict. Their conversation, "the lecture, what a grand success it was."

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Mails Open.--From Utica, 9:00 a. m., 1:00 p. m., 5:40 p. m. From Rome, 9:00 a. m., 5:30 p. m. From South, 11:40 a. m., 6:30 p. m.
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Mail leaves the Hill at the convenience of the carrier and comes up after the carrier gets down.

An article entitled "A College Man" appears in another of our columns this week. This was written by a freshman competitor for the staff of "Life." We hope to have more such contributions in the future. We ask all our readers, furthermore, who wish, to comment on such articles and send their comments privately to some member of our staff. We think that by this method that every underclassman who wishes can get the help of the best writers in college to help him in his own efforts with the pen.

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The sophomore hop will be on February 21st. This is to allow those who have no cuts to sleep over the morning of the dance. The fact that the dance is on the night before a holiday ought to insure a large attendance. The week should be made one of festivity for us all to remember. The way to bring this about is for every one to buy a ticket to the sophomore, and to bring a girl on. Especially, do you, underclassmen,

take this time to show your social ability. Think what an improvement on a college dance if we have eighty men at this dance.

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There are two college organizations which are now flourishing. These are the basket ball team and the dramatic club. It is needless to say that all clubs, teams and such undertakings bring renown, fame, and a good reputation (perhaps) to our alma mater. They keep us before the public. The people are made to learn that there is a Hamilton College which is endowed with lots of "push." Now, all the majority of the students are able to contribute is in the shape of subscriptions and attendance. But these are not unimportant. They are the means by which such organizations exist. Accordingly, do not think you are doing your alma mater a greater service in making a "max" in recitation than in subscribing to basket ball or going to see "London Assurance," the play of the dramatic club. In the first case, you are raising the standard of your college from an intellectual college. In the second case, you are telling abroad and helping outsiders to hear preached the good news of Hamilton College.

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Compulsory Sunday Chapel.

Compulsory Sunday chapel ought to be a thing of the past. The world moves, and we ought to move with it. The founders brought with them the New England puritan idea of compulsory church attendance, but that has had its day. "It is a thing of brass, smash it." Against Sunday chapel we have no objection; we think it is a good thing. But the idea of compelling a man to attend church is abhorrent to modern thought. Only a very few of our American colleges retain Sunday service as part and parcel of the required course, and these few are the very oldest and most conservative schools, situated for the most part in New England, where the hold of tradition and bigoted religious ideas is strongest. The most enlightened institutions have abolished, very sensibly, the relic of medievalism. Why it should still continue is a puzzle.

Some one has said that "Compulsory

religion is equivalent to no religion at all." At any rate, the exact difference is difficult to detect. We can understand how a man may go to church of his own free will, and be benefited thereby; but how he can extract any spiritual or moral good from a service that he is compelled to attend, we are frank to say, we fail to comprehend. Of course, the government of the college has the power to impose upon the student body any rules or requirements it may see fit. That, however, doesn't prevent us from protesting against what we claim is the injustice of this part of the course. We venture to say that no church in this country would assert or claim any advantages from compulsory religion; nor would any church, we believe, advocate or submit to any such procedure, even were the ranks of its congregation to pass away. With less justice, then, can a college lend its aid and support to a thing so manifestly contrary to the whole "spirit and tendency" of modern, and especially American ideas. Compulsory Sunday chapel is a regular college exercise. We have college work seven days out of the week. This is wrong. A great deal may be said upon this question, and we have not yet touched upon the practical side of it. We have found thus far one argument in favor of compulsory Sunday chapel. A great deal of reforms theorizing on the advantages has been delivered, and some of this we shall discuss in the succeeding issues.

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A Notice to Our Readers.

An unfortunate mistake occurred in our issue of last week. In the local column, mention was made of a cut by Prof. Ward. A question mark was interjected against the wishes and will of the entire staff of "Life." A meddling, interfering senior went so far as to secretly and covetly to add this question mark to some copy lying on a desk in the room where he happened to be. We will say plainly that if such an occurrence should be repeated, that "Life" will publish the facts of the case, and the name of the self-conceited meddler. We wish to apologize to Prof. Ward and our readers for the action of this wag (?).

Local Department.

H. MINTZ, - - - - - Editor.
J. P. TATE, - - - - - Reporter.

LOCALS.

January 31. Cold day. Esty Stowell, Jim Catlin, Dave Macnaughton and a few others go to the prize fight in Utica. Several of the fellows in college go to see "The Children of the Ghetto." Hank Miller sat in his customary seat in the front row. A lecture in the evening in the chapel on the Yosemite Valley. It was well enjoyed by those present. Hodges, '03, ran into the arbor while coasting the hill, and was injured.

February 1. Hamiltonian board cough up their first installment of cash for the publication. Ward cuts juniors Latin class again. Less members show up for dramatic club rehearsal.

February 2. Dramatic club rehearsal. Whist club of 1901 is entertained by juniors of Chi Psi. The club creates new officers, and elects men on the spot to fill them. Jim Catlin is elected marshal, and James McKee assistant. Dick Drummond is chosen assistant on the executive committee to McLaughlin. The purpose of these transactions is made plain the next morning. A collection taken in morning chapel to aid Red Cross in the Boer lines. Baker and Mason took up the collection, and it netted a little over \$20. A review for seniors in ethics after chapel. Deke Taylor and Freak Hull arrive in municipal law, out of breath. G. T. gets off a gag. Our reporter heard Westy singing "I have never seen the streets of." Why does not Westy sing at the next organ recital.

February 3. The four new officers of the whist club set up the other members on the strength of their new dignity. Dick Drummond cuts basket ball game to make a call. Tuthill comes down with the mumps. Another dramatic club rehearsal. Delta Upsilon goes to Utica to be photographed. Epidemic of breaking down on chapel stage—four victims. Prexy hurls heavily perfumed bouquets at Fisher.

February 4. Nels Drummond rises at ten a. m. Jim Minor, '94, visits the hill with a large stock of good cigars.

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Rick Hatch cuts chapel for some reason or other. Hon. Chas. C. Hawley, LL.D., of the class of '59, read a legal opinion on the trial of Christ in place of the regular sermon. It is needless to say that the paper was enjoyed. Shorty Holbrook slip up and falls down. Dr. Terrett gave another of his lectures on the sociology of the New Testament.

February 5. Dramatic club rehearsal. Esty Stowell gets melo-dramatic. Mars gives a graphophone concert. Hard basket ball practice. Rick is disappointed at not receiving a cut in Latin. Deke Taylor sprang a joke. Deke laughed. Henry Hull swore a long blue oath. Dick Cookinham and Freak Hull attempt to freeze Pretty out, but Brick Blake discovered them in the act and said ——— you you ——— fools. Joint debaters get down to business. They meet together and decide as to time and judges. Catlin asks "who is Palestine?"

February 6. Dr. Elkin makes some absolute statements to-day, and actually states his personal opinion on certain questions. Rick grows assertive in philosophy class. Shep for once says he "doesn't know." Mintz acknowledges that he is mystified. Nels Drummond, Campbell and Barnes prove to heavy for a sled, and break down in front of Moore's. Dramatic club rehearsal at Chi Psi. Shep says something about "census of the last population." Stints tells Vanamee that he makes more noise and does less work than any other man in the class. Esty gets into history on time, notwithstanding his previous engagements. Psyche says everything has a soul. "We all tread lightly for fear of hurting the floor's feelings." Marvin in French, "Do you know every time any one makes a mistake Bill Shep looks down at me and nods as if to say, 'We know better than that, don't we Gengy.'"

EXAMINATIONS.

There is a feeling among many students at Hamilton that the system of examinations as it exists is a useless and unjust part of the college machinery; a system of conditional exemption from examinations has been suggested, which without effecting their total abolition would excuse from them

such students as have attained to a respectable standing in their term's work. What standard would be reasonable and sufficient, we shall hereafter consider; but that the feeling is just and the system proposed desirable and wise, it will be our purpose to prove. The leading reasons why examinations are deemed advisable and necessary may be limited to three, inclusive of the entire argument for their existence. It is held that examinations compel the student to do all the work required in any department, part of which he may have left, or would otherwise leave undone through absence or ill-preparation. Again it is held that examinations are wise since they call for and compel a review of the entire work of the term, and thus plant the facts more deeply in the mind, and fortify the memory more firmly against future loss. Examinations are necessary, too, it is urged by many, because they encourage cramming, and cramming is desirable from the important relation it bears to the peculiar conditions of modern life. In this age of bustle and activity, it becomes necessary to learn to absorb quickly, almost instinctively, and to work rapidly, almost instinctively. This power cramming gives.

We are not to dispute the validity of all these contentions in themselves as arguments for examinations, or as principles of modern education. We are only to determine their significance and question their validity with respect to those students who because they have reached a standard considered respectable and sufficient, ought to be exempt from, as we believe they are not benefited but rather prejudiced by the present system of examinations.

It is generally conceded that if the conditional abolition of examinations is wise, the standard to be attained by exempted students ought not to be much above nor perhaps below a standard of 8. If we grant that this standard is sufficient, it can readily be shown that the argument is weightless as applied to an 8 spot scholarship, which justifies examinations on the ground that they encourage regularity and thoroughness in preparation. Now, if there is anything the college student loathes, it is examinations, and anything he loves it is exemption therefrom. He would not

be slow to learn that greater regularity and efficiency in preparation was an essential condition of exemption. No student could hope to attain the required standard whose preparation was not regular, and whose classwork was not uniformly good. No man would care to "run the risk" of attending classes unprepared, since a zero would work havoc with his standing, and inflict a terrible gash upon his chances. Thus, too, students would be led to a less frequent and promiscuous use of "cuts" for to reach the established standard and maintain uniform excellence of work, it would be essential to keep in closer touch with their subjects than repeated absence would permit. Indiscretion in cutting would enforce its own lesson, and inflict its own punishment. Thus our system would lead unquestionably and self-evidently to greater regularity of attendance and thoroughness of preparation.

Again it is argued that a general and final review of all the term's work is desirable, since it plants the facts more deeply in mind, and fortifies the memory more firmly against future loss. Now, nothing is more certain than that examinations with all their gigantic terrors do not promote in students, by nature indolent or negligent, regularity, either of attendance or preparation. On the other hand, since there is no tangible or immediate inducement for such regularity, the present system tends to influence students to defer real preparation until the few days prior to examinations. And no one pretends to believe that in cramming the student exercises to any great degree, any power but that of memory. What man thus engaged troubles himself to view his knowledge in the light of reason, judgment, imagination? On the other hand, students who absorb their lessons day by day with time to ponder and digest, are acquiring a more tenacious and disciplined memory, are obtaining a deeper knowledge of their subject, are more likely to hold fast to their facts than those who defer all to the last, and pass a perfect examination. The work of the term and not of examination is a true test of real scholarly strength. That the present system of examinations leads to the postponement of preparation cannot be disputed; that our system would discourage this general neglect we have shown; and that as a means of memory

and general mental discipline regular study is of far greater utility than cramming, is almost self-evident.

It is held by many in defense of examinations, that because they encourage cramming they are an essential discipline and preparation for the peculiar activities of modern life. That examinations do indeed induce cramming is indisputable, and that cramming leads to superficiality and shallowness we have abundantly proved. It tends also to physical disability. The work, the worry, the nervous tension incident to the preparation for examinations is frequently dangerous and sometimes ruinous. When students have worked diligently through the term and attained to a respectable standing as evidence of faithful industry, we may believe that examinations have for them all the usefulness and danger we have mentioned. And while examinations are thus harmful despite their infrequency, they are entirely too few and far between to make the great application they require a habit and a power. Habit more than impulse or spontaneity moves mankind. The student who has acquired the habit of regular and uninterrupted application has subdued and harnessed to himself the peculiar powers which are essentially required in this modern age, accuracy, rapidity, steadiness, thoroughness. These cannot be commanded by mere inclination, however vehement and intense. As a preparation for life, then, cramming is neither necessary nor wise. All the effects it is designed to produce can be achieved more efficiently by the system we advocate. It would be difficult, we believe, to point out one feature of such a system which would, work ill or disadvantage to any student. From the standpoint of the college and the student body it would be a beneficial reform. To qualify for exemption would lie within the reach of every student; in his hands would, as it were, rest his own destiny; and the fact that students generally favor the change is a proof that it would be generally used, in the manner we have described.

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