

VOICES.

The Library Fence.

THE new library fence, which has alighted like a plague in our midst, is, professedly, an economic enterprise. A financial economy? There is none; as can be easily shown. The former usefulness of our library is, however, most grievously diminished by way of this economy.

But let us look for a moment at the financial side of the matter. Now, the little spark, which has been fanned and kindled into this conflagration and usurpation of our privileges, is the loss, during past ages, of 250 good and bad books. Leaving out of account the cost of the fence, the wages of the extra assistants amounts to enough to replace the missing books many times over.

For this infringement of the commandment the library itself has been sent to jail, and the college at large fined some \$6,000 as an increased "public room" revenue. 'Tis not so much the payment of this sum that grieves us, for we would never complain were it expended in replacing the missing books, instead of being consumed in the purchase of railings, and in supporting some two or three extra librarians.

But, so long as the fence seems put there to stay, and the assistants' salaries so amply provided for, they may, in another way, serve exactly the same ends for which they were established, and yet the numerous and inestimable blessings of free access to the alcoves be once more restored to us. Let the assistants, who now willingly and obligingly run hither and thither after what later proves to be a book of no service to us, be installed as wardens of the two gates furthest from the library door, at which places they shall establish a strict quarantine over all outgoers. To this

scheme it has been objected that, in the winter time, the pilfering students will carry away books in the depths of their overcoats. This redoubtable difficulty is at once put to route, however, by obliging us to leave our overcoats outside those sacred precincts.

Any one who has ever visited the Johns Hopkins University cannot but have noticed the many and kindly conveniences which are everywhere showered upon the students. These, in the aggregate, create a distinct feature of the University, and one which Princeton would do well to occasionally imitate.

This new library scheme has met with sneering denunciation from the students. They feel that they have been wantonly debarred from one of the greatest privileges which Princeton extended. We say we are wantonly shut out because we think the loss of a few books is by no means commensurate with the penalty imposed.

If the trustees think that the students can at present derive as much profit from the library as formerly, they are mistaken. It needs only a half-hour's stay in the library to see the difference. Though formerly some score of men were always to be found among the alcoves, there are now a scanty half-dozen to be seen belabored among the labyrinths of the catalogue, where books have a wonderful way of eluding all pursuit.

If one has occasion, as we often do, to investigate some special subject for an essay or debate, he finds in Poole and the catalogue references to some forty or fifty books. These we were wont to look over at our leisure, selecting those of service. To order down this pile of books would now be absurd, no matter how much we should desire them. Hence we must content ourselves with three or four, chosen at hazard, and which are likely enough to prove useless to us.

The idle hours and half-hours—those numerous odds and ends of students' time—can no longer be spent casting about

among the alcoves, most pleasantly and profitably beguiling the time.

We, therefore, make an urgent appeal to our Trustees against the tyranny of the iron fence. As far as we are concerned, however, there is no special reason for removing the fence altogether, provided only we be allowed to go behind it.

A Word to College Critics.

PERHAPS the most trite of all expressions is, that our college life is a preparatory one, and perhaps this thought, of all others, is the least considered by college men.

They forget the path to proficiency in anything is an inclined plane, and judge the toiler at the bottom as if he had already reached the level heights above.

This can be most plainly seen in the case of college literary work, and its criticism. It seems as if every incipient essayist must be estimated by Ruskin or Emerson. His style is judged in the fierce light of the "Seven Lamps of Architecture," and his philosophy by the standard of the "Sage of Concord."

When a budding novelist blushinglly puts forth his first effort, it is chillingly nipped by a critic whose zero of reference is a Hale or a Stockton, and who expects to find the character delineation of a Dickens and the plot of a Conway in a story of eighteen hundred words.

But the poet, the unhappy poet, how his beloved metaphors are torn to pieces! How his meters are measured and lopped off on the Procrustean bed of Pope or Dryden! How his sonnets are scoffed because he did not begin where Shakespeare left off! This sort of criticism is plainly unjust. Shall we then forego all criticism? By no means; rather let college work be referred to a more lenient standard. Let the critic first be sure he is right, then go ahead.

How often he misses the whole point and aim of an article, and criticises it, justly enough in his own conception, but most unjustly in its true purport! How often a story is criticised as unreal and extravagant, when it was meant for an extravaganza! Then, critic, remember these two things; the college author is but a beginner and *tu quoque*.

Gymnasium Exercises.

THE question of compulsory Gym. is at present discussed by all classes; by the Freshmen because they are compelled to attend during the noon hour; by the other classes because they are compelled to stay away. Now, we do not decry compulsory attendance at the Gym., but, on the other hand, think it an excellent plan. But is it just, that three classes should sacrifice to the Freshmen the most convenient hour of the day?

According to the present arrangements the noon hour is reserved exclusively for the Freshmen. Hence the rest of the college must crowd in at 5 P.M. or stay away altogether. Now, there are many good and efficient reasons why each one finds it more convenient to attend at one hour and not at the other. In the first place, a man must go to the Gym. when he can, and, as the upper classes have recitations at 5 P.M. on Wednesday, Hall on Friday, besides certain optionals on Mondays and Thursdays, it happens that many of us are, unless something else turns up, left with Tuesdays and Saturdays in which to grow our muscle.

To be sure the Gym. is not large enough to accommodate us all, and hence numbers never attend. Now, with a slight change in the Freshmen system, and one which would not in the least discommode them, the convenience of everybody may be consulted. Let half of the Freshmen go to