

## THE ELON COLLEGE WEEKLY.

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## IMPORTANT.

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## DRIFT WOOD.

On the current of the rising stream, one may see floating sticks, chunks, and old logs. This is called drift wood. It always goes with the stream until an eddy or some obstruction is reached. There it stops. This is much the case in life. Upon the rising tide of any vocation, enterprise, or profession may be seen drift wood, and when adversity is encountered a raft of it accumulates. One observes the same principle also, in institutions of learning, and on the rising tide of any school is to be seen more drift-wood more of the floating student population than at normal times when the current of the school is at an average height; although when the stream is at its normal height occasional drift wood may be seen going down with the current.

There are various obstructions that catch and stop this drift wood in College life. Some of them are disagreeable room-mates, college restrictions as to liberty or curriculum. College life is not so nearly free from all kinds of profitable labor as it sometimes appears, some member of the faculty is partial or is disagreeable, and tantalizing, and it may be does not recognize the social or intellectual rank accorded to one by his home community.

Now, it should be remembered that drift wood is good for making fires, but that the wood crafts look to more substantial timber for material. A student who is not satisfied with what a reputable institution can do for him, and is stopped by any little hitch or obstacle and jumps to some other school is seldom the man who will bring things to pass. We are born with wills, not to change the course of the current of life in which we find ourselves floating for a brief space as bubbles, but with wills that we may keep in the stream and not wear our lives out with chafing against the banks. The college man who can pursue the even tenor of his college course through all the exasperations along the way rather than quit under provocation and fly to other ills that he knows not of, is the

man who can be depended upon as having at least one vital quality of leadership.

It is with a shade of misgiving that students quit an other reputable college and come to us in the midst of their course, claiming to have been mistreated there, or that other colleges may have students go from us with like reasons for the change. Yet we all know that so long as fallible men rule colleges or states universal justice is not to be expected.

## THE 1910 DEATH TALE OF LITERATURE.

Joseph Addison's "Vision of Mirza" represents life as a bridge on three score and ten arches with a number of broken arches at the farther end. The throng of infantile humanity that emerges out of a mist or fog cloud at the approach of the bridge, suddenly finds this bridge thickly set with secret trap doors and a large per centage fall through these into the flood below, before the throng reaches the fifth arch. These trap doors become less numerous as successive arches are passed, and the danger of dropping into the stream beneath becomes less and less until towards the end of the three score and ten where these doors begin to increase in number with a like increase in danger of falling into the ever flowing river of time, so that only a few persons are seen to hobble on over the broken arches, hardly a lone one escaping to get beyond the one hundredth arch.

This is a beautiful and impressive allegory and is kindred in thought to a reflection on the field of literature during the past year. The following are the chief of the literary characters who have fallen through the secret trap doors during the past year:

As one's eye runs down the list of men and women, more or less prominent in present-day literature, Major Martin Hume is the first acotth .dttkonowis h Hume is the first to catch one's notice. When the year 1910 dawned he had then just finished further studies among sixteenth century Spanish archives, upon which to base another of his characteristic "popularizations" of Tudor-days history. A. J. Butler, the foremost living Dante scholar, was at work on his translation of Spezzioni's commentary on the great Italian. "Louise Forsslund" was writing a story much in the vein of her charming Old Lady No. 31. Borden P. Bowne was correcting the proofs of his *Essence of Religion*, only the other day issued from the press. Fraser Walter had not laid down the management of the London "Times." "O. Henry," forewarned of the approaching end to his brilliant labors, had established himself in New York to make as much literary hay as might be turned before his early sun should set. To-day these and half a hundred others have laid by their pens forever.

Death came to ten of the fifty-six with the initial month of the twelve, the roll being begun on New Year's Day itself with word of the passing of Professor W. A. Stevens, of the Rochester Theological Seminary, who has contributed both generously and pointedly to religious letters. The others were the historians John Sedgwick, James Hannay and Dr. He Haas, the last named also an authority on archaeological subjects; the brilliant Aus-

train political economist Franz von Juraschek; Edouard Rod, the Swiss novelist, critic and editor, not so well known in "the States" as the real merit of his work warrants; Otto Bierbaum, the strikingly versatile leader of the young "revolutionary" party in present-day German letters; Barret Eastman (agent of his own end!), who stood well to the fore in American dramatic criticism; and the publishers Henry T. Coates and Sir Walter Scott, both authors, as well as producers of the writings of others.

If, in point of time, these names are to be first mentioned, there are six which must be set at the head of any such chronicle, through their long-proved mastery of the gentle art they honored. April closed forever the literary labors of "Mark Twain" and Bjornstjerne Bjornson. Professor William James died in July, and the veteran Goldwin Smith a month earlier—a few days only before the end came to the labors of Sidney Porter. An October dispatch told of the passing of William Vaughn Moody.

No American writer of our day has given to so large a number of people so great an amount of innocent entertainment as Samuel Langhorne Clemens; though this is a matter quite apart from the questions of the fineness of literary quality in his work. On that point critical opinions differ: there are those who consider that his *Joan of Arc* holds high place among seriously imaginative works of literature, and that at other times he showed far more than the talent of the delightful boys, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, and in such tales as *The Prince and the Pauper*, he left in a reader's memory-gallery distinct and individual character creations. It is really a tribute to his variety of interests that readers of many degrees of culture and taste are champions of half a dozen different specimens of his art as entitled to be called best. Whatever that best was, though, it was so good that his popularity has become fixed and general, in spite of the facts that, in common with most other professed humorists, his flint did not always strike fire; that there were undoubtedly commonplace and even tedious passages in his many pages; that he could not always deal successfully with plot, and that so often he mistook melodrama for drama.

The death of Bjornson not only makes the world of literature poorer by the loss of a poet, but the whole world poorer by the loss of one of the most amazing and vital of modern personalities. His was the true national voice of Norway, for, in the words of Brandes, "to name his name is like hoisting the flag of his loved fatherland." He was, however, more akin to the Russian school of letters than to the Norwegian, for he chose to be the laureate of his humble neighbors, immortalizing the toilers on the land, the cottage home and the lowly hearth, and he did this with such truth to fact, glorified, withal, by so large a spiritual insight, as to have done far more than merely win the enduring love of the masses of his fellows. Other ages will have new problems to face, and new prophets will arise to give guidance in their solution; but the author of *Ja, vi elsker* and *Over de Hoje Fjelde*, the creator of "Synnove Solbakken" and "Arne," the restorer of Sigurd Slembe and Olaf the Holy, is

more than "reasonably sure" of immortality.

A popularizer of psychology, Dr. James leaves thousands of pupils to mourn his death, and probably even more devoted readers to regret that the last of his fascinating studies of the deeper problems of mortal life and the human mind has now been given to the world. One does not need to say that he was the greatest of American philosophers to write, that he was the one best known both to this country and in Europe, for he had attained to a reputation nearly world-wide. Others might have enunciated his conclusions and remained obscure, but he had the advantage of a style so pellucid and captivating as to give weight and currency to his teachings. His "pragmatism," as he himself acknowledged, is only "a new name for an old way of thinking," but (as the Italian Ferrero goes on) "it offers Europe the first practical ground for the conciliation of the present religious, philosophic and scientific strife." Of the permanent value of this doctrine it is too early to speak, but there can be no just question of the impetus which James lent to the study of psychology by a combination of qualities which placed him among the foremost thinkers of our time.

An equally great thinker was Goldwin Smith, with whom we lose almost the last of the great Victorians. He was a mightily rounded scholar and he was a powerful writer as well, for, however much one might differ from his views, it was not possible to fail to recognize and admire the splendid lucidity and vigor with which they were set forth. In an age of lax and extravagant expression he used the written word with unerring precision and unflinching dignity. He was the keenest of partisans, but never a mere intellectual gladiator; whatever the cause he espoused, it was from conviction and not from caprice—and their name is legion who miss to-day the weight and influence of his pen and mind.

Just half the age of the Canadian scholar, Sidney Porter ("O. Henry") has attained the realest literary success in forty-three years. With a brevity and point new even to the American short

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