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and Boynton's 'Life of Gen. George H. Thomas.' I have neither purchased nor read the work referred to, nor do I propose to do so, but enough quotations appear in your article to show that time and experience have not cured the constitutional perversity of these authors.

In your review, the now celebrated letter written by Gen. Rawlins at midnight in the trenches at Vicksburg is adverted to. It is a momentous document from a subordinate to his commander. Not the least among Gen. Grant's claims to greatness is the fact that he selected Rawlins and kept him where he was, and allowed him to write such a letter and profited by its admonitions. You say justly that the letter bears internal evidence that Gen. Grant did not indulge in the habit of drinking to the extent of injuring the cause he served. While this is true, I wish to add that Gen. Rawlins himself, of record, certified to the same effect. When the latter went East in 1864 to assume the duties of chief of staff to the commander of the United States armies, he left many of his papers in the care of his neighbor and friend, Gen. John E. Smith of Galena, Ill., the first colonel of the celebrated "Lead Mine Regiment," who by genuine military talent and personal worth attained the position of brigadier and brevet major-general during the war. The same qualities preserved for him the friendship of Generals Grant and Rawlins till their death. Gen. Smith now resides in Chicago, a colonel upon the retired list of the regular army. The very fact that he was the depositary selected by Gen. Rawlins for his private papers indicates his nearness to the "chief of staff," and all who know him will justify such confidence. I have seen, read, and copied this letter, all of which is in the handwriting of Gen. Rawlins. Upon the back of it is an endorsement in the same handwriting, as follows:

"This is an exact copy of a letter to the person addressed, and delivered at its date about four miles from our headquarters, in rear of Vicksburg. Its admonitions were heeded, and all went well."  
RAWLINS."

This proves conclusively that, at some subsequent time to the date of the letter, and before May 1, 1864, Gen. Rawlins asserted, with his own pen and under his own signature, that Gen. Grant did not drink during such period. It proves, also, that while all men may not be liars, some are.—Very respectfully,

L. B. CROOKER.

MENDOTA, ILL., November 6, 1893.

#### MR. QUINCY AND THE PRESIDENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Is there no other side to the question discussed in your editorial on page 338 of this week's issue? Mr. Maxwell was not noted as a spoilsman before his appointment, was he? Did Mr. Dayton declare his preference for Tammany men until after his confirmation? Was Mr. Quincy the citizen recognized as a fit successor of Higgins the official?

The last case requires more than a passing word, for Mr. Cleveland came into the very holy of holies of the civil-service-reform gospel and called Mr. Quincy, theretofore a professor of the faith. Is the evangelist responsible for every backslider? Mr. Cleveland could hardly know intuitively what few people have learned, even here in his home, that Mr. Quincy is weak as cold. He took him at face value, without "ringing" him, and was deceived. Since June surely the President's time has been fully occupied with matters of more impor-

ance than Maxwell and Dayton, or even Quincy.

In a word, cannot the harm done by Mr. Quincy's treachery to the cause of civil-service reform be more quickly remedied by putting him, where he belongs, with the Hills, Sheehans, Platts, and Murphys, than by charging all the "false doctrine, heresy, and schism" to the President's account? Give the devil his due and start a column for Mr. Quincy. H.

UNIVERSITY CLUB, BOSTON, November 9, 1893.

#### ADMISSION TO SOUTHERN COLLEGES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The two articles on the above subject that have appeared in recent numbers of the *Nation* open a chapter of Southern educational history which affords us no room for boasting. The general inferiority of college training in the South is clear, and it can hardly be claimed that the signs of improvement are many or marked. The tabulated statements of your correspondent from New Orleans tell their own story, but the saddest part is that even the published requirements are upheld in very few colleges with any degree of strictness. A few words of conversation between the professor and student are often considered sufficient to determine the class of the applicant, and it usually makes but little difference whether the published requirements have been complied with or not. The vagueness of statement that is frequently met with in the published requirements of Southern colleges differs materially from the growing tendency visible in Northern institutions towards indefiniteness in the prescribed requirements for admission to college. The one is the vagueness of chaos, the other the brevity of conceded facts. A simple card with the inscription "At home" may be sufficient to bring together in New York a brilliant gathering of men and women with shining silks and flashing pins, but this effect could hardly be produced by so simple a means in Zululand. The published requirements of Harvard in Latin, to wit, "The translation at sight of average passages from Cicero and Virgil, with questions," may be plain enough for Boston, but such words would be understood very differently a few degrees nearer the equator.

The only hope for Southern education is that the colleges may in some way be brought together, and may come to some agreement as to the amount necessary for admission to the freshman class. Then schools would spring up to do the necessary work, and improvement in every grade of instruction might be confidently expected. For this reason the suggestion of Mr. Harrington that there be formed a Southern Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools is most timely and commendable. The way is being prepared for such an association by State organizations, such as the one that has existed in North Carolina for two years. I am glad to say that Tennessee is not behind North Carolina in this respect. Six years ago, through the efforts of Vanderbilt University, an association of this kind was formed in this State, and the last annual meeting has just been held at Belknap. Only five of the colleges in the State have taken an active part in this work, and it cannot be claimed that any decided effect has as yet been produced in the elevation of standard or in securing uniformity of requirements. On the schools, however, the effect has been more marked. Every year new schools apply for membership, and their mas-

ters show an earnest desire to bring their work into harmony with the requirements of the best college of their section. If the best colleges of the South could unite in a larger association of this kind, great good would undoubtedly result. Even weaker colleges would soon see that it would pay them to elevate their standard, to cut off preparatory classes, or, if such work must be done, to turn it over to a preparatory school wholly distinct from the regular college organization.

The experience of Vanderbilt University for the past six years has demonstrated beyond a doubt that, even with the present lack of training-schools, it is possible for an institution to maintain strict requirements for entrance. How much easier would this be if several or all of the leading colleges of the South would unite and stand together in the demands made on the schools. The responsibility in this matter rests on the stronger colleges, on those that have some endowment or derive their income from State appropriations. The weaker institutions, which are largely dependent on their tuition fees for support, will make no further advance than is forced upon them by the pressure of public opinion and the odium of comparison.

J. H. KIRKLAND.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY,  
NASHVILLE, TENN., November 6, 1893.

#### CONUNDRUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Part VII. of Murray's Dictionary seems to afford the derivation of the word *conundrum*, though the editor fails to notice it. As he says, there is evidence that it is an Oxford word, and he gives the following from Bedell, 1651:

"These *conundrums*, whether Reall or Nominal, went down with Erasmus like chopt hay."

There surely can be no doubt what this word is. The reference to realists and nominalists shows that something in the scholastic philosophy is referred to; and "conundrum" is easily recognized as meaning *argumentum Conimbricum*. The doctors of Coimbra, in their celebrated commentaries published in the sixteenth century, have in all cases a great deal to say of the "multiplex significatio" of one word and another. Indeed, such remarks are their great weapon. They used it for all it was worth, and a little more. Accordingly, a dealer in verbal quibbles might naturally have been called by Oxford students a *Conimbricus*, and his quillet *Conimbricum argumentum*. The original *c*, which this hypothesis requires, is preserved in another old form of the word, "conunrum." *Conimbrica* was in the sixteenth century the most usual Latin form of the name Coimbra, though *Conimbria* is also common. *Colimbria* was obsolete.

C. S. P.

#### Notes.

It is now announced by his publishers, Macmillan & Co., that Prof. Goldwin Smith will, on his return from England, take up the fore-shadowed second volume of his political history of the United States; but he has also in preparation for the press a book of essays setting forth his well-known and often unpopular views on questions of the day, such as the Jewish question, the Irish question, woman suffrage, prohibition, etc. The same firm have

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