THE COLLEGE CHEER.

In one matter, Princeton is certainly to be congratulated upon her originality. Our cheer is far removed from the conventional "rah's" and "ray's" which in most colleges follow each other in various convolutions and contortions, forming the main part of the cry. The "siss, boom, ah!" has what might be called an element of distinctiveness, of which the College may justly be proud. We remember well, one evening in the first term of our Freshman year, listening to a part of the class of '86 give it. They were seated on the steps of one of the Halls, and the sound of their voices floated over the campus in clear, crisp unison, as they dwelt on the prolonged ah! of the long cheer. It is often said that "distance lends enchantment," and it may be that the untutored ears of the verdant listener drank in with pleasure the unwonted sounds and failed to mark a voice or two out of time. Be that as it may, the rendering of the college cheer seems to us have degenerated. The long cheer is seldom given now, and when some great event—be it the circling of the diamond, a "Fresh. fire," or an honored guest—calls it forth in a burst of enthusiasm, the want of training is sadly apparent: a half-dozen men rush through the short cheer and the rest follow with some show of regularity. The word "Princeton" should not be given after the long cheer; it does not belong there. The long cheer is the effect of a rising rocket, and an added word gives undue prominence to the falling stick. It is hoped that some of the classes will take this matter up and practice until perfect unison and correct time be obtained.

But the restoration of the long cheer into favor is not enough. There is another improvement in the same direction to be made. Each year brings with it a gradual telescoping of the regular, or short cheer. This is at no time so noticeable as during commencement week, when the various classes of alumni hold their reunions. Until within eight or nine years the syllables were separated and the outsider thereby enabled to grasp the idea, the true meaning, of the shout. At present it is to him, we fear, little more than a confused articulation of unintelligible sounds. Here, too, the fault is not in the cheer, but in the rendering. We should remember that to keep our cheer distinct we must make it distinct. Let the words be less crowded and the time a little longer, and we will gain vastly in effect without losing a bit in enthusiasm. Let the "boom" be the emphatic word, and let it be brought out together and with vim. Then, with the "Princeton" to lengthen the cheer, we will be a match in all respects for any of our adversaries—in this line, at least.

OUR COLLEGE LIBRARY.

That the literary spirit among our undergraduates is steadily gaining year by year no one conversant with Princeton will deny. The quality of the work for commencement week in the Hall contests, and of the class-day speakers, the continued improvement in the essay work attested by our English professors, the formation of more literary societies in the different classes, and, not least, the steady growth and prosperity of our college periodicals, all attest this fact. Indeed, it could not well be otherwise. With the broadening of our elective course and the higher standard required for admission, this process must go on.

In spite of this the official statistics for the last few years exhibit the startling fact that the use of the library by college men, taken proportionately to the number during each year upon the rolls, has been steadily decreasing. The annual report to the trustees for June, '86, says: "The whole loan from the library this year was eight thousand eight hundred and sixty volumes, the students having bor-
rowed seven thousand two hundred and forty-eight. The loan of 1878 was thirteen thousand. In 1879 it was twelve thousand. In 1881, '82 and '83, about ten thousand each year. The decline during each of the last two years was about two thousand below this." The report for '86 places the circulation for the year at eight thousand five hundred, a falling off of over three hundred from the previous year. In '87 the entire loan was eight thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, slightly greater than that of the previous year, but no real advance, if we take into account the increase in the number of students. The statistics for this year have not been compiled at this writing, but it is not probable that they will show any very marked increase in the use of the library.

Dr. Vinton has wisely said, in one of his annual reports to the trustees, that the decline may be corrected "by suitting the library to the students as well as to the professors." Although these words were written several years past, the statistics we have just quoted, not to speak of the general feeling among the undergraduates, clearly show that this desirable end has not yet been accomplished.

What then are the points necessary to render a library suitable for the use of college students? Upon the correct answer to this question the fate of our library depends. In the first place what we need is not merely a circulating, but a working library. When one wishes to read a single book entirely through, it is very convenient to borrow and use it in one's own room. But if one is seeking information upon some special subject it often becomes necessary to consult simultaneously a dozen or a score of books, and to note down the material in each bearing upon the particular point. Obviously, in this case, the work must be done in the library. Obviously, we need a library suited not only to draw books from, but to work in. We are now led to determine the points essential to an efficient and convenient working library. They are simple and may be briefly stated. First, free access to the shelves for a number of consecutive hours; secondly, individual tables large enough to hold a number of reference books, well lighted during the day by large windows and at night by a soft and pleasant artificial light.

As to the matter of access to the books, it seems scarcely necessary now to urge its importance. After over two years of exclusion the point has been partially yielded, and now we are allowed the full use of the library for six hours in each week. If we thought this would be read only by those who have been subjected to the inconvenience of receiving their knowledge "handed from out a brass fence," we certainly should refrain from any further words upon this subject. To them any remarks upon need of access to the shelves must appear very much as would an attempt to prove the usefulness of sunlight. But it is quite possible that this article may come under the notice of some friend or alumnus of the college, who never had occasion to use the library during those two years. For these we may present a simple case by way of illustration.

A student enters the library to inform himself upon this theme: "The influence of Shelley's Italian life upon his art." The theme is not one of his own choosing, and he possesses no very definite knowledge of the editions of Shelley nor of the lives of the poets.

After an examination of the college catalogue he selects at random from among the lives of the poet Hogg's and Stoddard's. For these he makes out slips in the proper manner and after a few minutes obtains the books. There is no convenient place in the library for examining them. After a hasty glance which shows him that Stoddard's is only a collection of reminiscences, he returns this and decides that perhaps he had better take out an edition of the poet's works. By a like process he succeeds in obtaining the edition of Shelley edited by Mrs. Shelley, and, a full half hour having been now consumed, retires to his room to peruse them in comfort. After an hour or so reading the poems he turns to
the life of Shelley, to find that it treats only of his early life and is of no use to him. The library is now closed, and he has lost nearly a day. The new life by Dowden was upon the shelf, but not in the catalogue; and the excellent annotated editions of the works by Rossetti and Forman would not have escaped his notice had he been permitted access to the shelves. There are other grounds upon which we might urge the importance of this. Close contact with so many books is no small education in itself, and an afternoon spent browsing in a large library, dipping now into one volume, now into another, is by no means thrown away. Dr. Johnson, it may be remembered, has spoken very highly of such a use of books.

We do not undervalue admission to the alcoves a single hour in the day; yet such a restriction in time is a serious inconvenience. In the first place, no single hour could be found in the course of the day convenient to even a majority of the students. And again, while few spend more than six hours per week in the library, it is very often that one would work more than a single hour during the day, and it is by no means pleasant to be expecting every moment that the bell in Old Nassau will strike out the signal for a compulsory departure from the alcoves.

As to the other requisite, we need only remark that a table is as necessary a part of the furniture of a reference library as of a chemical laboratory, and that the manner of lighting is not merely a matter of convenience, but one which affects the condition of the eyes of all who study there.

Now, our library, beautiful as it is from an architectural point of view, and rich as it is in all departments of literature, when measured by this highest test—usefulness—falls far behind the standard. We have not free access to the books during a number of hours each day, nor have we tables well lighted and suited for working. If these defects were inherent in the library and could not be remedied, we should utter no word of complaint; but they are not. All of the privileges, or rather necessities, we have named are granted at the Columbia library, and all, we feel sure, may be extended to us at Princeton. When this is done we shall have a library equal to that at Columbia for usefulness in practical arrangements, as it now is far superior in point of architectural beauty and system of cataloguing.

Keeping steadily in view the ends to be accomplished, let us face squarely the objections which are brought forward, and consider the measures which seem advisable to obviate any difficulties. First, then, as to access to the shelves. Two objections are urged against permitting this. It is said that books are misplaced on the shelves, and that they are stolen from the library. As to just what extent books are misplaced, we have not been able to ascertain. Whatever mistakes are made, we feel sure are quickly rectified by the attendants, as we have never failed to find a book in its proper place when it was not accounted for upon investigation as having been properly borrowed from the library. However, it is very desirable that no such mistakes should be made, and, if this were a necessary concomitant to admission to the alcoves, it would be a serious objection. But, before adopting this view, let us consider whether the causes may not be found in certain defects in the present system. While some shelves are vacant, upon others there are more books than can properly be accommodated, so that often two or three books are found lying upon the top of an already over-full row. It is scarcely necessary to say that this makes it very inconvenient to replace a book in its proper position. Again, we note the hurry on the part of those using the library and the number of students in the alcoves at the same time, owing to the short time during which we are now admitted. Certainly, when one has but a short time to work in the alcoves, he is very apt in his haste to make a mistake in returning a book to the shelf. It is equally true that, where several are taking down books from the
same or neighboring shelves, confusion is more likely to occur than would be the case were fewer in the alcoves at one time. Another cause is the present method of marking the books, making it necessary to take a book down from the shelf to ascertain its number. Now, we are quite certain that what misplacement of books does exist, is due to these causes, and the remedies are at once suggested by the evils themselves. The first calls for the removal of the portion of the books to shelves less crowded. The second will be fully done away with by the measure we are seeking to attain, i.e., access to the shelves for a number of hours during the day and evening. The third suggests that the shelf number should be stamped upon the back of each book, as is now done in many first-class libraries. This would also make it at once evident if a book were not in its proper place.

The second objection urged against opening the alcoves is certainly a very unpleasant one to speak of, and yet, as it has been brought forward, we cannot ignore it. We refer to the alleged loss of books before students were excluded from the alcoves. Now, before we answer this, let us recall to mind just what was the state of affairs at that time. The slips for books borrowed were received at the desk in the centre of the library. Students, of course, were always expected to leave such slips before taking out a book; but the fact has been “transmitted from class to class by ordinary tradition,” in the same manner as the library laws and regulations, that this rule was not always observed by the students. Books were often taken from the library, read and returned without any record of the fact being left with the librarian. It is quite probable that, under this system, some books may have been lost through carelessness on the part of the users of the library. However, if any great number of books was lost, this explanation will hardly suffice. We are forced to the conclusion that there was some person or persons having access to the library, who deliberately stole the books. It is by no means likely that,

even with the same opportunity offered, any repetition of this would occur, for it is only rarely that one capable of such an act finds his way within the walls of a college. We are willing to admit the necessity of such arrangements that every book taken out will be properly charged to the borrower. But we do strongly protest against the assumption based upon this, that it is necessary to exclude the students from the alcoves, or limit their admission to a single hour during the day. Let the desk for charging books borrowed and receiving books returned be placed at the entrance door of the library. This would be even safer than the present system, for no book, whether brought by an assistant, taken directly from the shelf, or found upon one of the tables, could by any possibility be improperly removed from the building, unless it were secreted and smuggled out under the eyes of the person at this desk. Besides accomplishing this main object, it would be advantageous for several other reasons. It would leave the central desk entirely free for the use of the chief librarian in the management of the library. It would relieve the assistants of the duty of guarding the gates, and leave them free to furnish aid to those who might wish it. It would be almost entirely free from any appearance of detective duty, a statement that cannot be made of the present system. Lastly, it would render the fence of no further use, and we should awake some morning to find this bane to literature only an unpleasant memory of the past.

With this “brazen” nuisance removed a number of convenient reading tables might be arranged around the room. A far better arrangement, but one that would be more costly and might mar the architectural symmetry of the library building, would be the addition of a wing upon the site of the present old chapel, for use as a reading room. It would then only remain to introduce incandescent electric lamps throughout the building to make the library all that it should be. Certainly the clause in the bequest, referring to
artificial lighting, would not stand in the way of this. It was introduced only to avoid the danger of fire, and this would not exist if electric lights were employed.

Gladly would we have devoted our editorial space to more pleasing topics; to detailing the many and important improvements which Princeton has made within the past few years. But true progress does not always come from self-congratulation. With all our improvements, in this department there is a sore need of reform. No better time is there for beginning this than the present, and we earnestly hope that, before another winter shall drive us to seek closer companionship with our friends and our books—no less our friends—the arrangements of the library may have been so remodeled as to carry out, in a far greater degree than now, the purpose for which it was bequeathed.

 TENNIS.

A STRANGER walking over the campus, at the present time, if he were at all interested in tennis, would likely conclude from the small number of courts in order, and the few using them, that tennis was on the decline at Princeton. Indeed, if he should examine the records of Princeton in her contests with other colleges in this branch of athletics, he would find sufficient material to substantiate his conclusion. The many advantages which tennis insures should be sufficient inducement for more to try their skill. It is acknowledged that no game affords one better opportunity for development of the eye and body than does tennis. Yet in a college of six hundred there are not fifty who play regularly, (of course there are many whose efforts in this line are spasmodic), while the number of really skilled players will not exceed ten. True, other branches of athletics take the time and attention of many, but undoubtedly there is enough talent, if it be rightly applied and sufficient advantages be given it, to insure for Princeton a better record in the future. But something must be done to develop this talent, as it is evident with the present system we can never look for improvement. Where one has to play upon a court that has been cut up by heels or been previously used as a ball field by the small 'muckers' who infest that part of the campus, good tennis is impossible. Some, it is true, have a membership in the town courts, but they are generally crowded and are not conveniently situated to the dormitories. What is needed is a system of inclosed courts near or upon the grounds, equipped and kept in order by the association, for which a membership could be obtained upon the payment annually of a moderate sum. The plan has been frequently suggested, and indeed, several attempts have been made to carry it out, but they have been futile because feeble. If energetically taken hold of and the hearty co-operation of the college given, there is no reason why next spring such a system of courts should not be secured and tennis placed here upon a firm basis.