

**THE BATES STUDENT. A
MONTHLY MAGAZINE,
PUBLISHED BY THE
CLASS OF '78, BATES COLLEGE.
VOL. V, JANUARY, 1877, NO. 1**

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VARIOUS

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EDITED BY FRANCIS O. MOWER AND J. WESLEY HUTCHINS.
BUSINESS MANAGER: FRANK H. BRIGGS.

VOL. V.

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1877.

CONTENTS. VOL. V.

	PAGE		PAGE
A Menace to the Republic	173	Music (poem)	172
American Colleges	105	New England's Contribution to the	
American Culture	246	History of Doctrines	131
Am I Unreasonable?	37	Notes of Foreign Travel	254
"Amore ac Studio" (poem).....	134	Observation.....	81
A National System of Education.....	225	Our National Literature.....	219
Arbitration.....	6	Our Old College Days (poem).....	222
A Regulative Principle in Politics.....	193	Platonism and Christianity.....	245
Autumn (poem).....	195	Reproductive power of Human	
Autumn Leaves (poem).....	227	Actions.....	170
Caricature.....	1	Republicanism in Europe.....	227
Causes and Effects of the Crusades	201	Signs (poem)	82
Changes in the English Language.....	14	Shakespeare's Richard III.....	250
Circumstances	32	The Aim of the True College.....	136
Creeds	8	The Campus (poem).....	199
Echoes (poem).....	34	The College Bell (poem).....	56
Evolution (poem).....	10	The Deserted Church (poem).....	108
Finished Lives.....	55	The First Snow Storm. Part I.	
Foreign Immigration.....	58	(poem).....	10
Grecian Civilization.....	53	The First Snow Storm. Part II.	
Harmony of Culture and Religion.....	223	(poem).....	30
Here and There While Abroad. VI..	61	The Late Horace R. Cheney, Esq.....	87
Hinderances to Scholarship in America	79	The Land of Dreams (poem).....	253
Historical Sketch of Bates College...	157	The Mystery of Genius	196
How to Cure a Bad Memory.....	40	The Poetry of Classic Mythology	177
Hurry and "High Pressure"	90	The Plow (poem).....	176
Imagination as an Element in Pulpit		The Thunder Tempest (poem)	169
Oratory	27	The Value of Imagination to the	
Intellectual Character.....	84	Scientist.....	197
Italy.....	34	Truly Great, Truly Good (poem)	85
John Milton	109	Truth.....	12
Leaders and Leasers.....	229	Truth Indestructible and Perpetu-	
Life's Bells (poem).....	36	ating.....	167
Longings (poem).....	249	Whose? (poem).....	59
May (poem).....	115	Witchcraft.....	202

DEPARTMENTS.

Editors' Portfolio :	
Salutatory—Absence from College—Notes—Exchanges	16
College Morality—Our Lecturer Privileges—Our Mail System—Notes—Exchanges.....	41
Chapel Exercises—Errors in Pronunciation—Notes—Exchanges.....	86
Amore ac Studio—Class Disruption—Foot-Ball—Notes—Exchanges.....	91
Types of Student Character—Notes—Base-Ball—Exchanges.....	116
Commencement.....	142
The Dormitory System—Welcome to '81—Base-Ball—Notes—Exchanges.....	179
College Debating Societies—The New Board—Base-Ball—Notes—Exchanges	206
Notes—Base-Ball—Exchanges	231
Farewell—Study of History—Notes—Exchanges.....	207
Odds and Ends.....	22, 48, 72, 98, 126
College Items	24, 50, 74, 100, 127
Locals.....	154, 187, 214, 238, 264
Other Colleges	155, 190, 216, 240, 266
Chippings	76, 102, 129, 156, 191, 217, 242, 268
Personals	26, 52, 78, 104, 125, 192, 218, 244, 270

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CONTENTS.

Caricature.....	1
The First Snow Storm (Poem).....	4
Arbitration.....	6
Creeds.....	8
Evolution (Poem).....	10
Truth.....	12
Changes in the English Language.....	14
EDITORS' PORTFOLIO.....	15
Salutatory... Absence from College... Notes... Exchanges.	
ODDS AND ENDS.....	22
COLLEGE ITEMS.....	24
PERSONALS.....	26

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No. 1.

CARICATURE.

THE Italians used the term *caricatures* to denote those burlesque pictures in which the artist preserves a distinguishing likeness of a person amidst aggravated features and distorted proportions. From them we have borrowed the word *caricature* to designate any representation in which the peculiarities of a person or thing are so exaggerated as to appear ridiculous.

By its very nature, caricature is precluded from the province of fine art. Beauty tinges the mind with melancholy, fills the sensitive soul with a vague, unsatisfied longing, and suffuses the eyes with tears. Exaggeration and ridicule are not only fatal to such delicate shades of feeling, but are harsh and hurtful rather than pleasing. At first caricatures may have been designed simply to amuse people. But if caricature ever was productive merely

of innocent mirth, if people ever did laugh without malice, it was such a long time ago that the monks of the desert are not to be blamed for condemning laughter altogether. From simply exciting a feeling of the ludicrous, caricature came to be one of the keenest weapons of both Church and State—a weapon which all are willing to use, but one which terrifies all when turned against themselves.

Caricature derives its force from the power of ridicule. Its keen edge cuts what can not be untied. Ridicule has ever been the terror of genius: military courage can not endure it; rank cannot affect to despise it. Julius Cæsar defied whole nations with his sword, but could protect himself from the lampooning Catullus only by the garb of friendship. Aretino, "the divine," received tribute from all the kings

of Europe, and boasted that he had subjected more princes by his pen than the greatest warriors had subdued by their swords.

Caricature is more powerful than argument. It possesses all the exaggeration of eloquence, and is vastly more amusing. When wit has gained the laughers on his side he has disabled his antagonist; for amusing fictions affect the world more than the grave reply that would put them down. Witty and spirited caricature not only inflicts a wound, but, like a poisoned arrow, renders it incurable. Nast has shown that there is a plague spot in ridicule, and the man who is touched with it can be set forth as the jest of his country. Wit renders caricature irresistible and unanswerable.

Ridicule without the appearance of truth avails nothing. When directed against an individual it produces, by preserving the unity of character, a fictitious personage so patterned after the prototype that we can hardly distinguish the original from the imitation. It has been truly said that a fictitious Socrates, not the great moralist, was condemned to death. This appearance of truth is so finely executed in caricature, that the ambiguous image sliding into the mind, influences our judgment even when the real person is well known to us.

The power of ridicule, the keenness of wit, and the semblance of truth render caricature a powerful

weapon in any service. It is especially adapted to give expression to suppressed opinion. When a people has been denied freedom of speech and writing, they have generally left memorials of their grievances carved in wood or sculptured in stone—a record equally intelligible to the illiterate and to the learned. The ancients being denied other modes of expression, turned their mock offices and festivals, like the Saturnalia, into expressions of the suppressed opinions and feelings of the populace. Then, the severest caricatures were not drawn but acted. At the funeral of Vespasian, the archmime who represented the person and character of the deceased reminded the people of the emperor's avarice, by inquiring the expense of the funeral. "Ten millions of sesterces," was the reply. "Then," said the mock emperor, "give me the money, and, if you will, throw my body into the Tiber!"

Afterwards when the people were oppressed by the rapacious clergy, the popular indignation found expression, not in books—for the people could not read—but in sculptures and pictures which can always be understood. The cathedrals were ornamented with indecent figures of monks and nuns, designed to expose their profligate manners. In the Abbey of Fulda, as long ago as 1300, there was a picture of a wolf, wearing a monkish cowl, with a shaven

head, preaching to a flock of sheep, with these words of the apostle in a label from his mouth—"God is my witness how I long for you all in my bowels!" The walls of the cathedrals, the cushions of the abbeys, the margins of manuscripts, prayer-books, and everything pertaining to Romanism bore geese with praying beads, wolves and bears carrying the holy water, a sow with an abbess' veil, a pope thrust by devils into a caldron, or some other ridiculous caricatures.

Caricatures engraved on médals commenced in the freedom of the Reformation. The papists circulated a medal on which Luther was dressed as a monk; the reverse bore Catherine de Bora, the nun whom this monk first married. This medal was outdone by one bearing Innocent X. dressed as a woman holding a spindle; on the reverse was his famous mistress, Donna Olympia, dressed as pope, with the tiara on her head and the keys of St. Peter in her hands.

Thus caricature, by imperceptible degrees, rises from the expression of suppressed opinion to be a power in Church and State. Modern Italy by caricaturing her priests and cardinals is shaking off old superstitions, while the same art in America

is repelling the inroads of political corruption.

Caricature is favorable to truth. The surprising mixture of beauty and ugliness, wisdom and folly, virtue and vice in the human make, affords ample material by which the caricaturist may ridicule almost any person or party. But no object can be ridiculed that is not ridiculous. Beauty, wisdom, and goodness cannot be caricatured—the more they are exaggerated, the better does their possessor appear.

Founded on the constituent principles of the successful caricaturist's mind will be found a taste for congruity, a test by which he detects absurdity, or separates truth from imposture. This natural sense or feeling implanted in every mind, enables us to prove false ridicule to be such as readily as we can disprove false reasoning. The sanction of this same sense gives ridicule its tremendous power. The masterpieces of caricature, like those chimeras of hell which Æneas could not pierce, are invulnerable. These shadows of truth, these false images, these fictitious realities have made superstition tremble, turned the wisdom of political rings to folly, and bowed the spirit of Mammon himself.

THE FIRST SNOW STORM.

PART FIRST.

THE searching winds and bitter frost
 Were not sufficient for our host;
 The earth he grasps as though a foe,
 And stamps his seal with driven snow.

Oh! how it whirls adown the street,
 And eddies round the flying feet
 Which seek some place that will bestow
 A shelter from the driving snow.
 In and out, like magic woofs,
 Across the many-gabled roofs;
 Around the belfries, on the bell,
 Among the roosts where pigeons dwell;
 In alleys cramped, on gardens free;
 In through the wharves, upon the sea—
 Where stiff and cold the sails must be,
 And cold and stiff humanity,—
 In every place the east winds know,
 Is whirred and whirled the Winter snow.

And yet there sounds the merry chime
 Of bells, and laughter joins the rhyme,
 As forms flit by in wraps and furs,
 Not caring for the whirls and whirs
 Of all the winds, when they can go
 A-riding on the first new snow.

While up and down the busy streets
 The endless crowd another meets;
 In it are men with overcoats,
 And caps, and gloves, and walking-boots,
 Which keep their flowing blood so warm
 They hardly mind the blustering storm.

In it are women, wrapped so free
 Their blushing cheeks you scarce can see;