

THE BERKELEYAN.

"WESTWARD THE COURSE OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY."

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IN THE FIRE:—A CHRISTMAS REVERIE.

The Christmas ball is over,
The mansion is at rest;
No sound is heard but the sleigh-bells,
Of the last departing guest.
Now these are hushed in distance—
And the moon-beams glimmer bright
Over snow-clad branches,
And fields all dazzling white.
The lights are all extinguished—
The good-nights have all been said—
The mistle-toe hangs forsaken,
The garlands are withered and dead.
The lover's farewell has been whispered,
The foot-falls have all died away
From off the marble stair-case
Within the mansion gray.
The portals all are fastened;
And the porter's echoing tread,
Melts at last into silence,
And the house is still as the dead.

But a maiden in rich attire,
Satin and lace like snow,
Leans over the oaken mantel
O'er the fire-light's ruddy glow.
And with vague imaginings
And wonderings, her eyes
See in its fitful glimmering
Strange forms and faces rise.

She sees the wise men kneeling
With gifts upon the ground,
Before that lowly manger,
And the Christ-child halo-crowned.

Where the back-log casts a shadow,
She sees a garden rise;
And a man in flowing garments
Within it prostrate lies.
Suff'ring a whole world's anguish!
Its crimes, its sin and pain,
And then the vision fadeth—
The Garden of Gethsemane
Gives place to Calvary's agony;
And she feels Life's fearful cost,
While a thorn-crowned Saviour
Hangs, mocked at, on the Cross.

Now all the dusky pulses
Of the slumbering coals beat low,
And before her deep eyes dreaming
Other visions come and go.

With pensive brow she stands
In the glow of the rhythmic fire—
With musing eyes she sees
A city—tower and spire,
Gleam in the throbbing coals
That mingle their light with the gloom,
And shine on the oaken panels
Of the ancient, stately room.
Here she sees a palace
With lighted windows gay—
And here, a shining cottage
And there, a hovel grey.
And here, a tall cathedral
Silently solemn and grand,
Holding upward lofty spires
Toward the gates of the other land.
And here rises a humble church,
As she dreamily watches on—
But then the glimmering brightness dulls,
The city has faded and gone.

And still she dreams and gazes
Into the fire's bed—
And another city rises

From the ashes of the dead.
Here frowns a monument tall
Above the church-yard moss,
Here gleams a marble tablet
And there a wooden cross.
And here a stately tomb
Solemn, and still, and lone,
Raising its arched roof upwards
On pillars carved in stone.
And many a humble slab
She sees in the ashes gray—
Then monument, tomb, and tablet,
Crumble and fall away.
And the light fades off the panels,
And the maiden in pensive mood,
Sees only ashes left to mark
The place where the cities stood.

Berkeley, Dec. 25, 1874.

ST. JAMES.

"IT WAS ME."

BY PROF. SILL.

The question is often asked, whether the above is a correct expression. That depends on the meaning attached to the word "correct." If compliance with the rules laid down in grammars is meant, the question must be answered—no. The rule requires the predicate pronoun, after the verb "to be," to take the case of the subject. If, however, by "correct" we mean supported by good usage (in spoken, or in written speech), and consistent with the principles of grammar because logically accurate, the question may be answered—yes.

The phrase is instinctively felt to be correct, in a certain definite class of cases (to be described below), and accordingly it is almost universally used in speech, whenever the idea is expressed suddenly, without any deliberate reference to remembered rules. Let us analyze this instinct, and discover the reason which underlies it.

Whatever the rules of grammarians may say, the principles of grammar demand that the inflectional form (or cases) of words shall express their true relations to each other. "Me" is the objective case of the pronoun, of which "I" is the nominative. "Me" therefore denotes the object, "I" the subject, of any conception. The phrase, "It was me" is correctly used, whenever the relation of the person designated by the pronoun is an object-relation. This relation to the action may not be formally expressed: it may even be only sub-conscious; but if it is a part of the fact, the case should express it.

For example, a person runs against you in a dark passage. He enquires, "Who is this?" You answer, "It is me." You instinctively use the objective case, because your meaning is that you were the object run into, not the subject of the action in any sense. If he had asked, "Who is holding me?" You would have properly replied, "It is I"; for in this case you wish to express that you are the subject of the action. This may perhaps be more evident, if we complete the phrase by adding a clause in each case. The whole idea would be, "It is me (whom) you ran into"; and "It is I (who) am holding you." Taking the pronouns in their abstract signification, it is as if to the former question you had replied,

"It is a *me* which you have run into; i. e. a person in the condition of receiving an action;" and to the latter question, "It is an *I* which is holding you; i. e. a person doing an action." Indeed, that is just what you have replied, since the two cases, "me" and "I," mean precisely those two things, and were formed for exactly that purpose.

Let us take another example. Suppose that some person of unstable equilibrium in entering a car treads heavily on your foot. He enquires anxiously of your neighbor, "Was that you?" You reply, with a twinge of pain that puts all grammatical rules to flight, "No, it was me." Your foot (and that is "you," for the time being, as you are only too deeply conscious) is emphatically not an "acting subject," but a "suffering object;" and the nominative case would be no adequate expression of its relation to the action.

Or, to take a more obscure case, you knock at a friend's chamber-door. He responds, "Who is there?" Your reply inevitably is (unless you have a grammar under your arm to which you hastily refer for directions) "It is me;" or more likely, "me," alone. It might at first sight seem that in this case you are the subject of the conception, as being the one who did the knocking, who is standing there, and who wishes to enter. But these are not the ideas that were uppermost in your mind. If they had been, you would have said, "I," or "I," merely. You say "me," because the prominent ideas were, "It is me whom you hear; it is me whom you may or may not wish to see: it is me to whom you will or will not give admission." You are in a meek, passive, objective relation to the person within. He is the subject of the affair, not you. If, on the other hand, you were an angry avenger, sword in hand, battering on the door, and a feeble and apprehensive voice said, "Who is it?" you would naturally shout, "It is I!" i. e. "It is I who am come to slay you." Now you are the subject, and he the object of the whole conception.

Why, then, it may be asked might we not say in the former cases, "Me am the one trodden on;" or "Me am the one at the door?" Because it would not express what we mean. It would imply, by its very form, a subject-relation which does not exist. It is precisely to avoid this error that we have universally adopted the other phrase. Moreover, if the "me" were to be made grammatically the subject at all, it could only be as a "third person," or thing spoken of, with its verb in the third person; which might be expressed by some such phrase as, "This particular 'me' is the one trodden on;" or "Left waiting at the door."

Nevertheless, it would be rash to advise any one to say "It is me," unless he is sure of his company. Among technical grammarians it might put him in extreme peril of his reputation. If one wishes to avoid even the appearance of evil he had better meekly obey the rule. The object of language is, after all, to communicate your thought; not necessarily to put it into the form you prefer. When you are among the Romans, it is certainly the best in the matter of speech to do somewhat as the Romans do. If in a company of three, all of them ask you as to the route you came, you will

Notes on Exchanges.

S.7. We lay down the *Packer Quarterly* for October with feelings of decided satisfaction. The matter presented is various in character, and none of it has much of the appearance of having been written to fill up space, which so often fatigues us in college magazines. There is but one purely argumentative piece, and this is a vigorous attack on the opinion that "Genius is Eternal Patience." The writer's view is, we think, one sided. Nevertheless the side stated is pretty ably supported. "Greeks and Romans Contrasted" shows considerable reading. "Cloud Pictures" has a touch of real poetry in it. "Midsummer Scenes" is somewhat different from the common run of accounts of trips that students are so fond of publishing. "Poets in Fairy-land" is apparently an experiment, on the part of the writer, in fanciful composition. We cannot however call it a very successful one. We are sorry to say that the matter contained in this *Quarterly* induces a comparison with some of that often found in the *Mills Quarterly*, which is rather unfavorable to the latter. If our fellow-students who contribute to the *Mills Quarterly* will suffer a word from their friends, we would suggest that if they gave us fewer of those rambling treatises, that begin in the Garden of Eden, or some equally far-off locality, take a rapid flight through the universe, and end in dream-land, and a little more of that style of composition which they often do favor us with, and which expresses the real feelings, or the heart-felt opinions of the writer, on some definite subject, we should have no reason to make any comparisons at all. Of course the *BERKELEYAN* is well aware that it is not without sin in this respect, but it hopes that it will be pardoned for some of its obvious faults.

If the power to fill a considerably sized magazine with carefully written essays, is the test of the literary capacity of a College, Union College has reason to be highly gratified with the manner in which it can pass that test. A prize essay on Oliver Goldsmith, a long but rather rambling discussion on the Drama, "Cairene Sketches," "Grit" (the Blatchford Prize Oration), "George Eliot," "A Day and a Night in the North Woods," "True Culture," "Originality and Plagiarism," make up the students' contributions to the *Union College Magazine* for November. We are sorry that we have no time to enter into a criticism of these separate articles. Without any desire to be captious, we must say however, that it is strange that a College paper can not nowadays be published without an article on the different kinds of Education, or an account of somebody's trip "in the woods," or "in the mountains," or "down the river," or some where else. We suppose, however, that we must expect such things until this planet has been thoroughly explored by College parties, and the educational question has been settled to the satisfaction of everybody, including the Owl.

The *Georgetown College Journal* for January is no exception to this rule, for it has a letter from a foreign correspondent on an excursion in the Tyrolean Alps, as well as an article on "A Liberal Education." The author of the "Eulogy on the Science of Mechanics," being fearful that the tangled threads of his discourse might not be discernible in his essay, has favored us with a topical analysis of it at the beginning. We recommend his example to some of our own writers. L'Iconnu, who writes a poem on "The Surrender of Lee," may perhaps do the world a great service by remaining "Unknown." The essay on "Individual Success" is up to the average. The remainder of the matter is chiefly of local interest. We heartily wish the *Journal* success in its attempts to arouse the enthusiasm of its

students for Literary matters, and to elevate their standard in Composition. May the "Journal Prize" become a permanent endowment.

The *Qui Vive* of Shurtleff College, Ill., has some vigorous short articles, an account of the State Oratorical Contest, and several local items, together with a notice of the death of Dr. Rob. E. Pattison, and an oration entitled "Law and Liberty," prepared in competition for the State Contest by the representative of the College. As regards the last-mentioned piece we must ask the indulgence of the author. California, as he may know, is an ignorant country, where people grow big vegetables and shoot one another. Therefore when we see a sentence of this kind:

"Nothing could be more erroneous, though Law holds a subjective relation to God, and an objective to man, Liberty has a subjective relation to both, and the conflict cannot be transferred from the subject and object to the intermediate agents,"

We can only tremble in silent awe. Nevertheless we feel as if we had met something of the kind before—in Hegel's "Philosophy of History," perhaps.

What we have remarked above, in reviewing the *Packer Quarterly*, was written before we had seen the January number of the *Mills Quarterly*. We do not see, however, that there is much in this number to make us repent having spoken as we have done, though what we have said would not apply specially to it. We are obliged to the Editors for their cordial mention of the *BERKELEYAN*. We, too, feel that it is "sweet to be remembered." But our regard for the fair supporters of the *Mills Quarterly* does not prevent us from having the privilege of criticising their productions. Allow us then to say, that the matter in such essays as the one on "Power," and the one on "Will," may be indeed valuable, but that it is collected for so little purpose and with so little result that much of the effect is lost. To state that mental power is exhibited in all the works of art and skill, in all the deeds of executive genius, in all the patience and foresight by which scientific discoverers have made themselves renowned, is to state a mere truism; yet this is the only discoverable thread which binds together the heterogeneous material of the essay on "Power." And when the writer can express so well as she does, such varied thoughts, and can give us as she has taken pains to do the outcome of such a keen appreciation of the beautiful, we on our part can only wish that she had developed into a single essay, any one of the different fragmentary ideas that she has suggested, instead of collecting, as in a note-book, a variety of facts, opinions, and feelings, whose combination leave us without any distinct impression, and whose statement must be necessarily very incomplete. We make this observation merely because we have often noticed that some of the more thoughtful of the writers in the *Mills* are very apt to fall into such a habit as the one we have been criticising. If they would write a dozen articles on subjects that they now rush over in one, we are sure we should be less likely to feel like saying anything. After all though, it may be merely an overdrawn desire on our part to be completely pleased with our neighbors at the "castle among the hills," which prompts us in what we say. Or maybe we have been reading the *Owl* too often, and have absorbed a little of its hypercritical peevishness. In either case we can only beg pardon for our audacity, or indulgence for our misguided zeal.

IKE informs us that French plate-mirrors of considerable size, when broken by him, cost the firm something like forty-dollars!

ZETA PSI BANQUET.

The Fourth Annual Banquet of the Iota Chapter of the Zeta Psi Fraternity, took place on Tuesday evening, January 26th, at Martin's. The members assembled at the Berkeley Hotel, took carriages and rode to the Grand Central, Oakland. After a brief sojourn there, the ride was resumed, and many places of interest in Oakland and vicinity were visited. The afternoon excursion ended at the terminus of the wharf beyond Oakland Point, and all took the El Capitan for San Francisco.

Once in the City, all proceeded to the rendezvous, where several members of Eastern Chapters were already gathered. Here some time was passed in hearty greetings and salutations. At half past eight the "line of march" was resumed and the whole force gained the Banquet Hall, which was elegantly decked and ornamented for the occasion.

Nine o'clock came, and all were seated "round the festive board." Mr. Alexander, as presiding officer of the Fraternity, performed the duties of Thaliarchus. After a few opening remarks by this gentleman, the song, "Zeta Psi," was sung standing. Being seated, "Feast of reason and flow of soul," such as Pope never dreamed of, were mingled, and the ears of all were enchanted by Ballenberg's choicest selections.

The toast of the evening, "The Occasion," was responded to by Lloyd Baldwin, '60.

"The Grand Chapter," Howard R. Hetrick, '61.

"The Eastern Chapters," George W. Reed, '72.

Song, "Of all the orders."

"The Bar," Arthur Rodgers, '75.

"The Press," Ike, '77.

"The Regents," Herman Dwinelle, '78.

Song, "Our song 'tis of thee."

"To the absent ones," Arthur Low, '75.

Music, "Then you'll remember me."

"Zeta Psi, as it was," A. C. Niles, '50.

"Zeta Psi, as it is," Fred. V. Holman, '75.

All aims and purposes of Fraternity were happily embodied in the spirit of enjoyment and intelligence, which marked the occasion. Old times were revived and lived over again. Enjoyment of present was mingled with precious memories of the past; with respect and love for the principles which govern Zeta Psi. Youth told in glowing terms of the present and pointed to many bright omens of the future. Age alone could tell of that which was prophesied thirty years ago and how well the prophecy has been fulfilled.—It was a time to be remembered, marked as it was by true principles and suggestive thoughts, which are cherished as sources of good; honored as it was by the presence of men, who, in their own persons, fulfill the prophecy made thirty years ago. "It was intended — (and the intent has been carried out,) that the social qualities should be cultivated and improved by its kind aid. And that its members should come (in some degree, perhaps, through its influence) to be of gentle wills and ways, so that each should occupy the highest station we know of, in all the world—that of GENTLEMAN."

IN THE Assembly, Friday, Jan. 29th, President Gilman said that he had been requested to express the thanks of the managers of the Deaf and Dumb and Blind Asylum, to those students who, after the late fire, took upon themselves the responsibility of protecting the property that had been saved, at a time when it was exposed to the weather and to thieves.