We mail this number of the Echo to each member of the Freshman class. We take it for granted that in becoming a part of the college you desire to give your willing support to all its interests. The college publications certainly can not be the least to appeal to your generous loyalty. We shall consider each member a subscriber until otherwise notified. The succeeding numbers may be obtained at the office of the Managing Editor.

NOTHING succeeds like success. It is always easy to argue in opposition to an untried plan. Experience is not against it, but there is no experience on its side. The world has somehow managed to get along without the novelty, and the presumption is easy that it can continue to do so. It is a leap in the dark to adopt an innovation. Whoever risks it must expect to be accused of every variation of rashness and every perversity of motive.

The proposal of an advance in coeducation at Colby was the signal for copious illustration of this rule. The prophets of evil had their innings all summer. But when the morning of Sept. 25th dawned upon the largest Freshman class that the college had ever admitted, and when it was discovered that, with the increased number of young men, exactly twice the number of young women that had ever entered a Colby class before, were to be counted among the new comers, an “I-told-you-so” air began to halo the vicinity of the faculty; it was evidently with a great effort that they refrained from jubilation over the result of the first trial between fact and prediction; and the silence which suddenly settled down upon the disbelievers in the new
plan seemed first eloquent, then pathetic, and is rapidly verging upon the deliciously humorous. The changes recommended by the faculty are in actual operation. No revolution has occurred. The college work proceeds as before. An “X” will be as hard for the members of ’94 to win as for any of their predecessors. Diplomas are not distributed gratuitously on the campus, and a speaking acquaintance with the Greek alphabet has not been made the maximum requirement for admission to candidacy for the bachelor’s degree.

Instead of plunging into calamity, Colby has evidently reached the beginning of a new era of prosperity. A way has been found to be just and wise, without being impractical. No previous Echo editors could have honestly said that the men in college would be heartily glad to see sixteen young ladies in one of the classes. We believe however that we express the very strong sentiment of the men whom we represent when we say that the presence of sixteen young ladies, under the organization adopted by the trustees at their last meeting, is most cordially welcomed; that we intend to follow the example which the faculty have set in showing that we are glad to have the advantages of the instruction given at Colby equally free to men and to women; and that we hope to see the ladies’ classes rapidly equalized in numbers with those of the gentlemen.

The fact that a plan has been discovered which makes such a change of opinion not only possible but perfectly natural, seems to us to place upon the friends of Colby a responsibility which they cannot honorably evade. We know that many of the supporters of the college have secretly worried a great deal over the question “What shall we do with our girls?” They believed in coeducation in theory, but very few of them had the courage of their convictions when the selection of a college for their own daughters was in question. If the promises with which the new organization begins shall continue to be realized, coeducation, as arranged at Colby, will no longer be the resort of exceptional courage, but it will be the preference of wise parents who wish their daughters, as well as their sons, to have the most substantial collegiate education. After three members of the Colby faculty, by doubling their hours of instruction, have demonstrated that the present plan is all that has been claimed for it, the duty of providing the means for carrying out the plan, without killing the professors, cannot be decently disregarded. The college has taken a step into a wider sphere of usefulness than its friends have been in the habit of anticipating for it, and we believe that this courageous occupation of the broader field will win for Colby the financial reinforcement which the larger work demands. The college will then not only be able to do its present work for a greater number of students, but the instructors can be much more efficiently organized and the results may be correspondingly improved.

We have met one criticism of the new organization for which our imagination is not fertile enough to conjure up a justification. We have heard the suggestion that the present order is somehow a reflection upon the Colby alumnae. From our point of view it seems hardly credible that any one at all acquainted with the facts can candidly put such an interpretation on them. While there has always been enough dissatisfaction with the old plan of coeducation at Colby, there has never been a time when the men in college would not have vigorously resented any personal disparagement of the young ladies in their classes. We have no doubt that our trustees, faculty and students would unanimously consent to rest the reputation of Colby upon an impartial comparison of our alumnae with a proportionate number of graduates, during a corresponding period, from any college in the country. The idea that any changes of organization which the Colby authorities might make could be justly construed as a criticism of such a company of graduates can hardly survive a moment’s calm reflection. It would be quite as rational to find an insult to the whole body of alumni in the fact that the ancient text-book instruction in the sciences has been superseded by the laboratory method; or that the regulation of the college no longer proceeds from the assumption that the students are a set of sneaks, or at best a lot of primary scholars, but presumes that they are gentlemen.

We do not profess to see far enough into the future to discover what portion of the world’s work will eventually be divided indifferently between men and women; but we share the Colby idea that men and women have perfectly equal right to the most liberal education, and that in their different ways they can make equally good use of it. We are proud therefore that Colby has become the pioneer, in New
England, of the most promising plan yet suggested to make the American college the common possession of men and women.

The response to the Echo's call for prize articles has not been so general as we had expected. It seems to be the common consent that the long summer vacation has not been favorable for works of a literary nature. Encouraged by the promises of several to write articles if more time should be given we have decided to postpone the date at which articles become due to the first Wednesday of the winter term. This will give the present term and the holiday recess for completing the articles.

To the new comers we would say that the competition is open to all students now in college. The conditions on which the prizes are to be awarded may be found in No. 3 of the present volume of the Echo, which may be obtained of the Managing Editor.

The management of the Oracle Association for 1890 is to be congratulated on the solid financial condition in which it has left the association as shown in the Manager's report published in this number. Not only is the association out of debt, but without a single liability its resources amount to almost one hundred and fifty dollars, with a cash deposit in the Ticonic Bank. Additional credit is due the management when we think that besides defraying all expenses incurred in publishing the '90 Oracle a considerable debt remaining from the '89 Oracle has also been removed.

The Character of Julius Caesar in Shakspere's Play.

Judging from the other plays of Shakspere one would naturally expect that Julius Caesar would be the principal character in the play of that name, and consequently furnish more material for a sketch than any other character in the play. He is then surprised and disappointed to find that in a play of nearly twenty-five hundred lines Caesar himself speaks but about a hundred and fifty, and disappears with the first scene of the third act, while Brutus in the first two acts alone has more lines than all Caesar's, and after these he is the principal actor. It would seem that it was truly said that "in the play, as in life, Caesar has been sacrificed to Brutus." Caesar's utterances in the few lines which he does speak hardly increase our admiration for him. What impresses us most strongly is the monstrous conceit and assurance displayed by the man. His confidence in Caesar struggles with his superstition, but soon overcomes. He shows none of the patriotism and noble firmness of Brutus. All his thoughts seem centred on Caesar. When he sits in the Senate he asks, "What is now amiss that Caesar and his Senate must redress?" seeming to care far more for the fact that it is Caesar who will have the glory of redressing the wrongs than for the thought that wrongs may now be righted. The only places where we detect any approach to that tenderness which is supposed to underlie all human nature are in the second scene of Act II, where he yields to Calphurnia, and later when the conspirators call and he asks them to drink wine with him. And even in these cases it seems to harmonize better with the rest of the portrayal to believe that his yielding was the result of a superstitious fear for Caesar's welfare and his hospitality due to his idea of how great a man as Caesar should receive his callers. On the whole it would appear that an actor coming to this play with no knowledge of the historical Caesar might work out a representation, which, while being a conscientious interpretation of Shakspere, would be one of the most repulsive characters we would wish to see.

But, as an actor studies not merely his own lines but those of the other characters of the piece in order that from the opinions there expressed and the sympathetic touch of these other personalities he may gain a truer conception of the one he is to impersonate, so let us study the character of Caesar by inspecting the others of the play. This means a study of each of them in order that we may allow for individual bias in the view of Caesar entertained by each. Opinions of Antony may differ; but there can be no question that in his funeral oration he would go quite as far as modern eulogists do on funeral occasions, with quite as little regard for exact facts; and he does not so much describe Caesar's virtues as appeal to the emotions and passions of his hearers. It is said that Shak