

**LETTER FROM BENICIA.**

*School Examinations—The Arsenal—The Weather, etc.*

BENICIA, December 5th, 1860.

**EDITORS BEE:** Happening to be in this, an ancient metropolis of the Golden State, I attended the exhibition of the pupils of the Collegiate Institute, under the charge of C. J. Flatt as President, assisted by Professors Sarles and Pope. The exercises, which consisted of the reading of essays, interspersed with fine performances on the piano—which is Professor Sarles' department in the Institute—I append the programme, which you can give a place if of sufficient interest and does not trench too far upon your space:

**PROGRAMME.**

1. Essay: "The Indians have not an inherent right to the soil"—C. Van Fell.
2. Variations: "Il Trovatore"—R. G. Parks.
3. Essay: "Eloquence"—Wm. M. Graham.
4. Bouquet de Melodies: "Louisa Miller"—Charles Ruoger.
5. Essay: "A conservative view of slavery"—Hugh Ritchie.
6. Variations: "Il Moise in Egitto"—W. M. Graham.
7. Essay: "Turkey should not be divided and appropriated by the other European Powers"—Leon D. Freer.
8. "La Plainte et la Brise" (The Pianist and the Breeze)—F. Weimann.
9. Reading of the School Boys' Journal—Editors, John Adams, C. McAlpine.
10. Essay: "Are the Planets Inhabited?"—Mr. Hurlburt.
11. Essay: "Currents of the Ocean"—Van Teegarden.
12. "Prayer from Othello," for the left hand alone—Leon D. Freer.
13. Essay: "Commerce"—Jerome N. Stevenson.
14. Essay: "The Crusades"—James A. Booth.
15. "La Pluie de Perles"—Hugh C. Ritchie.
16. Essay: "Mathematics"—L. P. Marshall.
17. "The Hundredth Psalm"—Wm. M. Goodyear.
18. Reading of the Young America—Editors, Robert G. Parks, P. Gabbert.

I have attended, I was going to say, a "thousand and one" school and college Exhibitions—and I must say that it has never been my good fortune to be present at a more interesting one than this. The essays were of the highest order as compositions, and especially those on Mathematics, Currents of the Ocean, Commerce, and The Crusades, exhibited a depth of scientific and historical research and labor which would have done credit to older and more experienced heads. That upon Mathematics was indeed of the highest order, and is one that the ripest scholar might be proud to claim. The musical exercises reflected the highest credit upon both pupil and teacher—the most difficult pieces being executed with the skill of a master. The manuscript papers—the School-Boys' Journal, and Young America—exhibited a variety of talent, solid, sentimental, pathetic, refined and broad humor—while upon this portion of the Exhibition there is not a little rivalry in this department between the males belonging to the Institute and the young ladies of Miss Atkins' Female Seminary—there being some right smart "spats" between the different parties, in which justice, as well as gallantry compels me to say "Young America," on the former side of the house, as is not unfrequently the case in all contests where the ladies are concerned, comes off worsted. The young ladies of the academy were present with their principal, and many a young gentleman's heart palpitated, as he stood upon the rostrum before the battery of bright eyes leveled at him—some of them would as soon have faced the battery of "black cannon" at the Arsenal. By the way, I visited the Barracks—(I do not adopt the orthography charged upon Gen. Jo. Lane, "r-a-x-rax")—and found the walls of the new Arsenal built of Benicia stone from the Government quarry hard by. The building is completed. It is undoubtedly the finest building in the State—if not one of the best of its department in the Union. The weather is bright and beautiful—a regular Indian Summer, hazy, lazy day. The bay is dotted with sails—Martinez lying off over the bay—and old Monte Diablo looming up loftily in the distance.

I may give you a further sketch of matters and things.

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