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THE DEBATE.

As the WEEKLY goes to press the attention of the College world is centered on the Yale-Harvard debate, which takes place to-morrow evening in College Street Hall. The debate bids fair to be interesting from several standpoints. The question is a popular one and its phrasing admits of no ambiguity in interpretation, a fact which in itself assures a lively interchange of argument from the outset. It remains to be seen what effect several innovations in the spirit and method of the preparatory work will have on the general character of the speaking, and we shall have more to say on this subject in next week's issue. Meanwhile it is unnecessary to assure Yale representatives, and those who have devoted themselves during the past month to the training and criticism of the team, of the best wishes of the University for to-morrow night's contest with an honored and worthy rival.

THE PHI BETA KAPPA QUESTION AGAIN.

The announcement a few weeks since of the remarkably small number of men eligible to Phi Beta Kappa from the Class of Ninety-Nine, together with recent attempts to revive interest in the social side of this organization, has occasioned no little discussion of late among undergraduates. It will be remembered that last Spring the Class of Ninety-Seven raised the requirements for society membership (to commence with the present Sophomore class) to a stand of 3.30, a much more radical move than that made by Ninety-Five and afterwards revoked by the Class of Ninety-Six. The chief argument put forward by Ninety-Seven, based on the unusually large number of Philosophical and High Oration appointments in Ninety-Eight, was that the honor of membership was cheapened by the increase in numbers. This decision, however, was made by men who had already received their keys, many of them for no more than a High Oration standing and who would have voted very differently two years before. Were the interests of the subsequent classes, which were to be affected by this decision, sufficiently regarded in this matter?

Unless we mistake the object of Phi Beta Kappa, its aim is solely to

encourage and foster scholarship. It is not and never can be a social club. Men receive elections on an intellectual basis for work done in the class-room, and into this selection the element of congeniality never enters. Inasmuch as the organization is not a voluntary one, like a reading, modern language or social science club, whose members are brought together by their interest in one special line of study, but is made up by an arbitrary selection of men who have the honor by scholarship alone along very different lines, membership must remain a distinction merely and, as such, should be within the reach of all who have fairly earned it.

The fact that there are three times as many men who earn this right to-day as there were 30 years ago does not prove to those who are still candidates that the honor of an election has been cheapened. They do not attribute the increase to less exacting marking or to the extension of the elective system, for their work is, in the main, required, up to the time when the appointment list is made. They note that the classes have nearly trebled in size during the period in question and that there is no longer a sharp line of distinction between the scholar and the literary man. Indeed it is a noticeable fact that there is almost always a majority of Phi Beta Kappa men among the TenEyck and Townsend speakers. There has been a gradual merging of the one class into the other, and the result has been a better quality of work along both lines of student activity.

There are also in every college class a number of able men who, during the first two years of the course, have devoted their energies to athletics or literary work, perhaps to the neglect of the College curriculum, and have received Oration or Dissertation standings. By Junior year such men begin to turn their thoughts more seriously from the smaller world of College life to the future. A more earnest spirit pervades their class-room work, the studies are more congenial, often bearing directly on their future occupations, and very frequently honors are taken at graduation by men not in the first third of the class. A graduation election to Phi Beta Kappa is not only a highly coveted prize in itself, but, in the case of men of this stamp, is an honor to the College and the society as well. Under the recently adopted system there is little incentive for even the most conscientious of such men to make a well nigh impossible effort to be among the first 15 or 20 men in a class of 300.

The lowest limit of the High Oration group is certainly a fair limit of division. It offers an opportunity for distinction to the faithful student of average ability and to those who are working under disadvantages of preparation. Is the underclassman unreasonable in his protest against the removal of long established privileges from any man who has justly earned them?

The itinerary of the University Glee and Banjo Clubs, which we publish in another column, is of especial interest to our Western readers. The trip of the Clubs this year has been extended much further beyond the Mississippi than usual. It is only necessary to call the attention of the graduates of the different cities to the dates of the concerts. The Clubs depend to a great extent on the efforts of the Yale men in the cities they visit for the success of the trip. We trust the reception given to the Clubs will be of the warmest character.

YALE AND THE "H" INCIDENT.

Do not be deceived. Yale is not a boiling caldron of excitement. The Campus isn't hot. The elms and the dockweeds and Hotchkiss Green are safe. The people at Cambridge, who do things undreamed of at Athens or at Carson City, may continue punitive and disciplinary experiments *ad libitum*, *ad infinitum*. The Harvard *Crimson* may put into type epithets and adjectives that make the jubilation on the ink rollers sizzle and smell badly. And the men of Yale will not be decoyed into saying: "Thus has Harvard acted; thus has Harvard spoken." They know Harvard men,—very many of them—and much admire them; and prefer to take their idea of Harvard from these men and not from such things as have been said and done of late.

And the students of Yale know better than to try to explain these things. Besides, they have better things to do. Semi-annuals are at hand and the Faculty threatens their goal line. And when they have a few spare minutes, they like better to talk it all over again, recalling how eleven boys went up from New Haven to Cambridge and held fifteen Harvard veterans at bay; and then came back, brushed up their game a bit and met fifteen more veterans and overcame them in about the finest, hardest football game you or anyone else ever saw (which fact was cheerfully subscribed to by this last set of veterans).

And the students of Yale are right in choosing their topics of conversation.

Universities and Their Sons.

It is proposed to publish a work on the universities of the United States, with biographical notices and portraits of their sons, including in this term both graduates and those whose eminence has been such as to call for the recognition of the higher institutions of learning in the bestowment of appropriate honorary degrees. The full title of the work is to be "Universities and Their Sons: History, Influence and Characteristics of American Universities, with Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Alumni and Recipients of Honorary Degrees."

A leading object will be to show the connection of our universities with the real life and interest of our people. There will be a history of the development of each institution with a brief statement of its present equipment and biographical sketches, not alone of distinguished graduates and laureates, but of the rank and file of university sons who have attained less conspicuous but not less worthy positions in the various walks of life. It is proposed to begin with the four great universities

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CUI BONO?

At the close of the year it is both natural and profitable that each one should inquire into the benefit as well as the uselessness of many things. At such a time let your questions be applied to life insurance. There is nothing experimental about it. A large number of insured people have died, and the good or ill of the system has become clear enough from examination of what good their insurance was to them or to their families.

To very many it served to lengthen life, because of the freedom it gave from anxiety with reference to the fate of their dependent families. For the same reason it helped largely to make their last hours peaceful and tranquil. Yet it may be said that multitudes are alive, to-day, who are not insured, and that they are as well and hearty as a year ago. What advantage, then, have the insured over these fortunate ones?

The answer is brief and clear, the insured have saved in most cases what they would have otherwise used. They have laid the best foundation for future saving. They have the satisfaction of feeling that they have well done their duty towards those dependent upon them. They do not stand in jeopardy of every day fearing lest the future may find those unprovided for who have hitherto looked to them for support.

And how about the uninsured? When they become convinced of the folly of their ways they will have to pay a permanently larger rate of premium, because they failed to comprehend the danger of carrying their own risks. If they wait longer they will be too late to insure at all. Or even should they be in time to avail themselves of present health and insurable condition, the premium will so increase, with increasing years, that they must be contented with an amount very inadequate to the real requirements of their families.

The probationary stage of life insurance has long since passed away. It has fully justified its right to the approbation of the wise and the prudent. No one in these latter days questions the benefit of life insurance, or the wisdom of the system, but simply asks the question of himself, How much good is it to me?

Least it should be one of the chief regrets of the passing year that you have neglected this great means of good, seize now the opportunity and let there be a New Year of secured insurance. Even before '98 comes in, see the nearest agent of The Great Mutual Life of New York, and through him place yourself beyond the reach of unavailing regrets.

Yale Law School.

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which have held the earliest and highest place in this country's educational forces—Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia.

The editor-in-chief of the entire work is General Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, LL.D., ex-President of Bowdoin College and ex-Governor of Maine. An introduction will be written by Professor William T. Harris, '58, United States Commissioner of Education. Special editors who will have charge of the representation of their respective universities are: William Roscoe Thayer, A.M., Harvard; Professor Charles Henry Smith, '65, Yale; Professor John DeWitt, D.D., LL.D., Princeton, and Professor J. Howard Van Amringe, Ph.D., LL.D., Columbia.

The first volume will be confined to the history, description, etc. of the universities and will contain about one hundred illustrations of views of buildings, grounds and scenes. Additional volumes will be devoted to biographical sketches and portraits of alumni of the four universities and recipients of honorary degrees from them. Biographical editors from each institution are as follows: Charles E. S. Wingate, Harvard, '83; Albert Lee, Yale, '91; Jesse Lynch Williams, Princeton, '92; Henry G. Paine, Columbia, '80.

The complete work will consist of some five large volumes and the subjects of the biographies being so scattered, it is probable that three or four years more will be needed for its completion. It is intended to bring out the first volume in '98; the others to follow as fast as the collection and preparation of the biographical material will permit.

The work is to be published by the R. Herndon Company of Boston, and will be sold by subscription.

C. H. SMITH.