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DEBATING AT YALE.

It is always satisfactory to win a debate with Harvard; it is doubly satisfactory to win a close but decisive contest against so able and well trained a team as that which Harvard sent down to New Haven last Friday. The result reflects credit both on the Yale debaters and on the University which they represented.

But this is no time for self-gratulation. Debating at Yale is still in a precarious condition. It depends on the self-sacrificing work of a few men instead of being the concern of the University as a whole. In some respects this is more true this year than it has been since 1893. It has been harder to get good opponents to debate against the University team;—for by good opponents we mean not only those of natural ability, but those who have taken the pains to develop arguments which are really difficult to answer. Such painstaking and unrewarded work as was done by Mr. Gleason in 1894-5 or by Mr. Rice in the two years following, has been conspicuous by its absence. There has been no approach to the sensational practice debate of the Spring of 1896, in which Messrs. Hume, Rice, and Studinski tore great holes in the argument of Messrs. Baldwin, Clark, and Stokes; and forced them to develop, in the last days of their preparation, that strength of defense which so dazed their Harvard opponents. Mr. Bingham, the president of the Yale Union, has done what one man could; but his time has been so far occupied with administrative arrangements for the debate as to have but a small part of his strength for controversy with the team. A few others have given casual help in the way of criticism or argument, which has been welcome and useful. But the burden and heat of the day has been borne by Dr. Reynolds.

The plain fact is that Yale as a whole does not appreciate debating as it appreciates a great many other things. Whether there be good reason for this lack of appreciation is not a question to be here discussed; that the lack exists is a plain fact. There is plenty of criticism of anybody and everybody if Yale is beaten, but little or no substantial reward for those who win. The one reward that a strong man really cares for (apart from the approval of his own conscience) is social prestige. Does suc-

cess in debating give to a student this in anything like the same way that success in College athletics or in College journalism gives it? Does success in the "organizing of victory" in debate give Dr. Reynolds the same kind of recognition which Mr. Butterworth receives from success in the organizing of victory at football? Even among those graduates who profess to care much more for debating than for football, how many instinctively think of the man who has changed Yale's old record of forensic defeats into a record of victories, as having a distinguished place among the benefactors of the University? We doubt whether the proportion of those who appreciate his work is as great among the corporation as it is among the students. Yet Dr. Reynolds gives approximately as much time to the help of Yale debaters in the course of a year as Mr. Butterworth gives to the help of Yale football men; and it is no disparagement to Mr. Butterworth to say that Dr. Reynolds' time is, from the great world's standpoint, much the more valuable of the two.

How can Yale graduates help to change this state of things?

Not by talking. Talk is very cheap. There are a few speakers of natural ability who, if they choose their audience and take pains with what they say, have it in their power to help the social prestige of debating. But the men who have the ability to do this are rare, and the labor involved in combining truthfulness with effectiveness in this matter is very great. And above all things let the graduates restrain their natural impulse to talk of reviving Brothers and Linonia. What these societies may once have been, is matter of opinion. The halo with which their memory is surrounded seems hardly warranted by the scraps of contemporary evidence which have come down to us from the first half-century. In the twenty years of which we have better record, Linonia and Brothers were dying of senile degeneracy. The effort to galvanize life into a corpse which has died of that disease is foredoomed from the outset.

Not by giving more prizes for debating. We have enough money prizes already—possibly too many. If Yale debating is to win prestige at home and victory abroad, it must be in the hands of those who "contend not for gold but for honor."

Not by offers of assistance in coaching, except to a very limited degree, under the advice of Dr. Reynolds and in strict subordination to him. It is better discipline for the purpose in hand, for a College man to debate against his fellows than against a trained lawyer. If the lawyer really thinks out his case, he will be too strong for the purpose; if he does not think if out, he will be too weak; in either case the result will be demoralizing. If a graduate offers, not argument, but advice to the members of a team, the danger is that, coming up for a day or two, he will not understand the wide needs and restricted powers of the men whom he advises, and will correct a few errors of detail at the sacrifice of harmony of general development.

The first step for Yale graduates to take in promoting the interests of Yale debating is to find out just how much or how little they really care about it themselves. If they take pains to be truthful with themselves and with their successors now in College, their words will have influence. The students of Yale always respect sincerity and are ready to be moved by it; if a man is not sincere, they see through him and shun him. If a graduate prefers a football match to an intercollegiate debate,

let him admit the fact. If he takes more pleasure from having Yale win in athletics than in forensics, let him not proclaim anything else. Even if, in the excitement of a speech, he deludes himself as to what he really thinks, he is not likely to delude anybody else. The worst service which a graduate can do for debating at Yale is to give an exaggerated statement of his feelings on the subject.

Having found out what they really think, let the Yale graduates show their faith by their works. Let them teach by example. They complain that the sons do not go out of their way to take debaters into the best College societies. How is it with the fathers? How many of those graduates whose position and life makes their recognition a valuable thing have ever troubled themselves to take any notice of Dr. Reynolds' work? Unconnected with the College except as a loyal graduate, Dr. Reynolds has given, for nothing, services whose value can hardly be measured in money—services which could only be rendered by a man who is at once a gentleman, a born logician, and a trained constitutional lawyer. If our leading Yale graduates cared for debating as seriously as they think they do, Dr. Reynolds could not visit a city in the Union without being sought out by leading men of the place and make acquainted with others—in short, without receiving in full measure those social rewards which are given for distinguished services that have no money compensation. But what actually happens? Dr. Reynolds will probably be invited to speak at a few Alumni meetings—much as the restaurant-keeper, who heard that Dr. Chauncey Depew talked well after dinner, sent word to Mr. Depew that he could have a free meal at his restaurant at any time he chose, if he would only talk to its habitués for an hour afterward.

Now all this is a matter of no great consequence to a man like Reynolds, who has always met the people he wanted to. But it is of great consequence to a University like Yale. The example of the alumni is more potent than their precept. The sons will think lightly of what the fathers say, and be influenced mainly by what they do.

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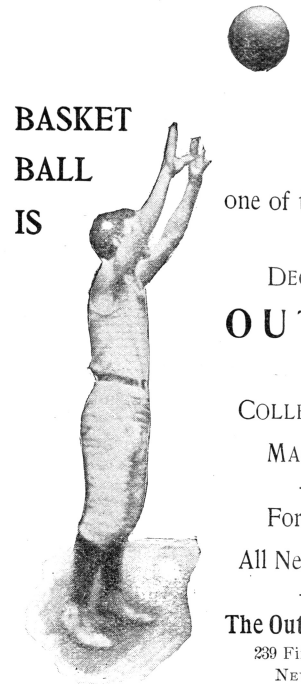
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YALE'S VICTORY.

The victory in College Street Hall last Friday night was one which reflects the highest credit upon Yale's representatives, the officers and members of the various debating societies and especially upon the faithful body of coaches who have devoted themselves to the University during the past month. Everything about the debate, from the presentation of the argument to the minor details of business management, went off with an order and precision which showed that Yale's interests were in efficient hands. Yet the honor of victory—and it was no small one, for it means much to the College to be successful in both the intellectual and athletic contests of the year—is one in which the undergraduate body has little right to claim a share. While the enthusiasm and confidence shown by students and alumni had a great deal to do with the success of this season's football team, the victory of last week was won through the faithfulness of Yale's representatives in the face of a marked lack of interest in the College world. In this issue Professor Hadley has given his views regarding the present status of debating at Yale and has offered valuable suggestions which merit the careful perusal of every student and alumnus.

The fault for the present condition of affairs in debating lies as much in the general policy of the debaters themselves as with the College at large. There are plenty of incentives to effort along forensic lines at Yale. Every intercollegiate representative receives as a mark of distinction the golden charm adopted by the Union for its teams last year; the winning debaters have their names inscribed on banners in Union Hall; there is the Thatcher Prize for the preliminary competition, and after