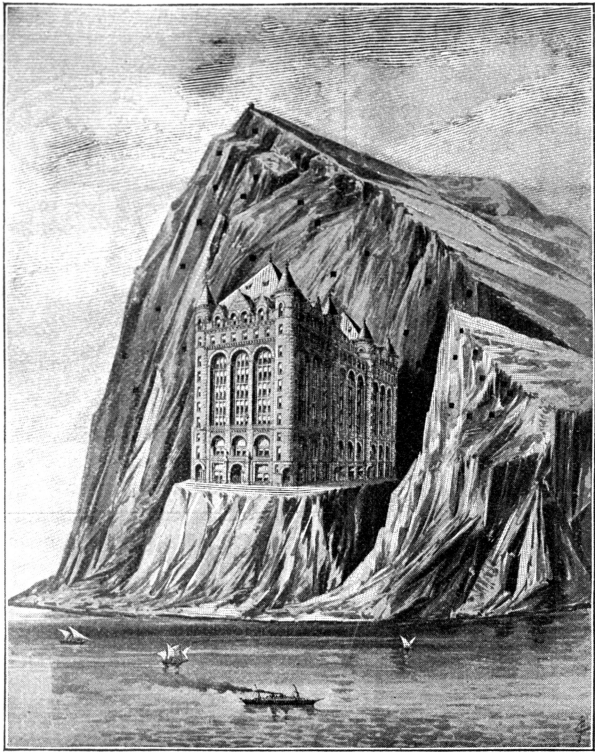


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THE IMPREGNABLE PRUDENTIAL.

## PROGRAM ADVERTISING.

A Claim that Abuses Have Been Removed—An Editorial Analyzed.

To the Editor of YALE ALUMNI WEEKLY:

Sir:—To those ignorant of the real situation in program advertising your editorial on "Blackmail in the Name of College Advertising," which appeared in the issue of March 17, will prove very misleading and prejudicial. Your columns have recently emphasized the fact that every question has two sides. The force of your condemnation would hardly bear this out, but a statement of the *raison d'être* of such publications and their development in connection with athletic events may throw a little light on the other side.

The "why" or "wherefor" you have well stated, in saying that "the original score card or program was more or less of a convenience and necessity." Now, wherein has it outgrown its purpose? Laying aside some little acrimony displayed in the criticism, the essence of your article seems to be that the "convenience has been increased into a complete nuisance," in other words, that the old reproof given to Yale athletics applies, and that programs have been overdone.

That this has been true I frankly admit; but that such is the case at present I emphatically deny. The adoption of the undergraduate rule in athletics was the doffing of the cap to collegiate amateurism. The passing of the programs from the hands of professional advertising agents to the direct control of the athletic association was a further acknowledgment of the wisdom of placing college games and all the accessories directly in the hands of college men. That "no use is without its abuse" has apparently been true of these publications. The evil has been found, however, and the remedy has been applied with a cure almost at hand. To spoil this ounce of prevention by a well intentioned attempt to remedy what has already been remedied,—and mayhabs balk any further progress,—is rather discouraging. For the past two years the programs of the Track Athletic Association have been directly managed by its officers, and last Fall, for the first time, the football association pursued the same method. By this is meant that the editors of the souvenirs were merely agents of the Association without further authority than was expressly granted. Direct responsibility for every statement, uniformity in prices to advertisers, and restriction in employment of agents to college men, so far as possible, has thus been secured. Bearing these facts in mind, a short synopsis of your editorial may aid us to reach a little different conclusion.

Your first statement was to the effect that "these publications are issued simply for the purpose of securing as much money from advertisers as can be drawn out of them by almost any

means." It is rather sweeping, to say the least. With your assumptions that such a program is more or less of a convenience and necessity, it hardly seems consistent to say that its sole object is to mulct advertisers. Business men are quick to see the advantages of an opening with such a large body of young men, and the man who first shows this, is the one who is apt to catch their ears. Besides, it is a characteristic of Yale life for every man to do with all his might what his hands find to do. If he failed in his efforts to do his level best to carry out the trust imposed in him, he would be guilty of the worst kind of negligence. In addition, you give too little business acumen to the ordinary advertiser to say that he is unable to judge of the merits of the offer presented to him.

To continue, "The publications rest for revenue largely on blackmail." "The man works and levies in the name of Yale and the average advertiser, good naturedly or in fear, yields to a greater or less extent." This state of facts has undoubtedly been true, when the programs were in the hands of professionals, but at the present time it is absolutely false. One instance of this kind would be taken cognizance of immediately by the athletic representatives, as you well know. The keynote of a college publication is reciprocity. The touchstone of this kind of advertising is business. By one investment you reach audiences ranging into the thousands.

The gist of your closing paragraph, aside from the editorial immunity which permits strong characterization, lies in the statement that "those who have legitimate business operations with the College are unjustly treated and are forced to consider some means of reprisal by which all members of the University suffer." You probably refer to the college publication. But can not such a work, directly under the control of the athletic associations, be also ranked as a college publication? If so, they all possess correlative rights and duties. Is it a sin because one succeeds where another fails?

From a little experience on both college publications, so called, and on program work, I can frankly state that the majority of business men are more apt to accept the latter than the former as an advertising medium. Why this is so, the average college man can guess. To say that Yale esprit de corps and interest in its display on the athletic field had something to do with this success may not be far from wrong. Beyond all these considerations, another way is laid open for men striving to aid themselves. Far be it to close up these avenues of financial rescue. Men who enter college have essentially different capacities, and anything that will tend to develop some latent power should be encouraged rather than condemned. If the steps already taken, to prune out the defects which have existed, may be carried out rather than retarded, there will no longer be any further occasion for such harsh criticism.

"X" RAYS.

St. Paul, Minn., March 23, 1898.

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