



THE CRISIS IN DEBATE.

The Union is Nearly Dead, but Conditions are all Favorable.

It is unnecessary to go into the story of debate at Yale in the latter part of this century. For twenty-five years it was in a state of, at least, suspended animation. Various suspicions of life have been entertained by hopeful physicians from time to time, and there has generally been someone to deny a permit for burial.

But of course the real life all went. Occasional efforts at resurrection were either not properly directed, or else reckoned without the facts. All the clubs formed for the revival of debate, up to the organization of the present Yale Union, failed utterly. The present Yale Union is now decadent. All the favoring influences of encouragement have been thrown about it; all extraneous aids have been secured; but, although it has been a central agency by which means for the development of good debaters have been employed successfully at Yale, and the taint of constant defeat in debate has been removed, and, although other minor clubs have come up and grown into strong life during this period of the recovery of Yale, the Union itself is almost dead. The changed situation is one of the most peculiar conditions which contemporary Yale history furnishes.

The first indication was the general enthusiasm aroused for intercollegiate debates and the great importance which was immediately attached to them. A little effort too, in this line has now won for Yale three consecutive debates, a most gratifying result. Each intercollegiate debate is now approached with intense interest and a victory is celebrated with illumination and bonfires.

THE WINDY CLUB.

But better still, the enthusiasm of victory has reacted favorably upon the general practice of debating. In the Senior class has appeared a new organization popularly known as the "Windy Club." Its membership of eleven is composed of men thoroughly interested in debating. Its sole purpose is personal improvement in speaking. Regular weekly debates are held and each speaker is subjected to severe criticism. During the year and a half of its existence, there has been no diminution of interest, and the very evident improvement in each man testifies to the success of the society.

The Junior class, also, has its "Junior Wigwag" with a membership of from thirty to forty men. Its object is, in general, the same as the Senior club, although it attempts to give a more social character to its meetings and the work of each term is closed by a banquet. From this club came the two undergraduate speakers in the last debate with Princeton. The success of the club can be inferred from the fact that it has been so largely copied in the Sophomore class.

Two new clubs similar in numbers and purpose have recently been founded. They are known as the "Sophomore Wigwag" and the "Sophomore Wranglers." In other words, four new and flourishing debating clubs have been started in the past year and a half. Debating has been placed on a very much better footing and now attracts more and abler men than for years past.

PRESENT SITUATION DANGEROUS.

There is a danger, however, in the present situation. The new clubs are not self-perpetuating. They come and go at the inclination of a few leaders. They partake more and more of a hot-house character and give no assurance of permanency. Nevertheless their advent was hailed with enthusiasm by the College because it was generally supposed that they would act merely as feeders to that central and permanent organization, the Union. Quite the contrary has really taken place. Instead of adding men and interest they have taken both away. The Union has declined more rapidly than before. Its debates are now perfunctory affairs not worth the little time spent upon them. The efforts of the officers have elicited no response and it has reached the point that men of incoming classes shun any connection with the Union.

CONCLUSIONS.

Such has been the course of events in the past few years. Certain conclusions are almost self-evident. First, debating has revived and the tide has been turned in Yale's favor in intercollegiate debates. So far as can be judged from this fact, the desperate lament over Yale's intellectual decline may well cease.

Second, the decline of the Union at the very time of this renewed interest proves that its methods are inadequate.

Third, debating is now in a critical position.

CO-OPERATION.

In order to perpetuate the present enthusiasm, the various clubs must be made to coöperate under some general management. This the Union, as the central organization, could readily accomplish. A radical change in the Union itself is necessary. It could give up entirely its weekly debates and consist merely of officers chosen from the various clubs. To these officers power could be given to direct more or less closely the work of the various clubs, to arrange interclass debates, to establish from year to year new clubs as needed, in a word to unify the debating interests and make them permanent.

On the other hand, if it does not wish to give up its organization, it could limit its membership to the best men of the various clubs and have monthly debates on subjects of real interest. This would place membership on a sort of competitive basis and make it proportionally more valuable. In any case, it should have a definite oversight of all college debating.

Last of all, debating has failed in the past simply because it was left alone. If the University wants to let debating die, neglect is the proper treatment. If, however, there is a desire to foster and encourage one of the best lines of intellectual activity, then the whole graduate and undergraduate body should give debating their immediate and hearty support.

DEBATER.

Football Officers Elected.

The following officers of the University Football Association for the College year 1899-1900 were elected on Friday evening, January 27: President, Percy Avery Rockefeller, 1900, New York City; Vice-President, Charles Tarbell Dudley, 1900 S., Washington, D. C.; Secretary, George Peters Chittenden, 1901, New York City; Assistant Manager, Robert Burns Hixon, 1901, La Crosse, Wis.

MORE ROOM AT THE PROM.

And More of the Best Things of a Promenade.

Of the Junior Promenade of 1899, that is, of 1900's Prom, which came to an end at 4 A. M. Wednesday, January 25, two entries should be made in the record of Promenades. One is: more room than for many Januaries. The second entry should read: more joy than in any January—and also February, in which month the feasts of older days were held.

The first entry is supported by statistics; the second entry is a great deal better supported, to wit, by the Class of Nineteen Hundred.

More room was accomplished by having more people outside the Armory. The difference, as estimated at about midnight, which was the edge of the evening, was that thirty-three and a third per cent. of the usual crowd inside were this year outside. This figure is probably high enough and probably not much too high. The people who were outside were those who generally came from outside of New Haven and also those who generally came from New Haven. The latter were especially infrequent in the Armory.

This making of more room in the Armory was in the first place a good stroke, according to those who were most in and of the Promenade. It did not appear to them at all in the light of a problem or a difficulty.

THE REAL POINT.

But this was not the reason why the Prom. is carefully rated, by those judges who knew most about it, as the best of all Proms. There was more chance on the floor; dancing was easier; but dancing may be very easy in this sense and still be an arduous endeavor. The judgment on which rests the second fact, hereinbefore recorded, concerned itself, in its finding of facts and in its conclusions, with much more essential qualities of dancing, or walking, or talking, or sitting, or eating supper, or coming or going home.

Just more room, and so dancing easier and the Promenade better! This is a flippant and a superficial judgment of which the WEEKLY's records take no great notice. But those real qualities which make dancing something more than easy, so circumstanced the late Promenade, as to have guaranteed its success, had the floor been like the seashore, and the dancers like the sands thereof in multitude. And what are driving rainstorms and shortages when these things are so.

As to details, the decorations of pink and white were laid on the bare walls and barn roof with such consummate art, as to suffuse the whole ball-room as with the light of a soft sunset or a radiant complexion. Perhaps this was too well done, and veteran and hardened critics—Senior and Juniors—said that the most beautiful part of the Promenade was not appreciated on the floor and in quantity; but they averred it was very much appreciated.

These facts are easy of observation and record. When it comes to anything like the quality of the supper, the WEEKLY refuses to commit itself. Good men and true said that it promptly and pleasingly sustained and refreshed the tired dancers. Other good men and true said that the Commanding General of the Army has not made any reflections on the Quartermaster's Depart-

ment, whose language would meet the requirements of a just judgment on the supper. The great traditions of Yale seem to be maintained.

The shortage used to exist everywhere except in the Committee's treasury about this time. This year it exists everywhere and in the Committee's treasury. The difference between the Committee's treasury and other people's treasuries is that the former's difficulty will be remedied by direct assessment of \$3 on all box holders, which will leave a deficit of only about \$100 for this group of men. Other deficits probably average higher.

THOSE IN THE BOXES.

Following is a list of those who were present in the boxes:

- Box 1—J. B. Adams, '99; M. C. Harvey, '99; A. G. Vanderbilt, '99; B. B. Moore, '99; G. A. Kernan, '99; W. D. Kountze, '99; N. Williams, '96; H. L. O'Fallon, '99; W. F. Whitehouse, '99; F. M. Davies, '99.
- Box 2—Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Spitzer, Toledo, O.; Miss Luette Spitzer, Toledo; Miss Anna Reynolds, Toledo; C. B. Spitzer, '99; E. E. Yaggy, '99.
- Box 3—Mrs. J. P. Kimball, New York City; Mrs. Smith, New York; Miss G. Grinnell, New Haven; Miss Richards, New York; B. T. Doudge, 1901; J. C. Kimball, 1901.
- Box 4—Mrs. Butler, Detroit, Mich.; Mrs. Allen, Hartford, Conn.; Miss Ely, Cleveland, O.; Miss Butler, Detroit; Miss Allen, Hartford; H. S. Curtiss, 1901; W. B. Allen, 1901; L. K. Butler, 1901.
- Box 5—Mrs. Parmelee, Miss Parmelee, Miss J. Parmelee, all of New Haven; Miss Land, New York; Miss C. Land, New York; H. F. Parmelee, '94 S., C. R. Hickox, '93; H. H. Townshend, '97; E. S. Parmelee, '99.
- Box 6—Dean and Mrs. Wright; Miss Wright; Miss Merritt; A. K. Merritt, '93; Henry B. Wright, '98, all of New Haven.
- Box 7—Mrs. DeForest and Mrs. J. N. Hall, New Haven; the Misses Whittelsey and Miss Hall, New Haven; Miss Hope Smith, Providence; Miss Dunn, Boston; C. S. DeForest, New Haven; J. T. Whittelsey, '67 S., New Haven; S. D. Ames, '99.
- Box 8—Mrs. Quackenbush, New York; Mrs. Stone, Mohawk, N. Y.; Mrs. Barnum, New Haven; Miss Marguerite Quackenbush and Miss Grace Quackenbush, New York; Miss Marjorie Stone, Mohawk, N. Y.; Miss Barnum, New Haven; Miss Wagstaff, New York; L. T. Stone, '99 S.; L. S. Quackenbush, '99 S.
- Box 9—Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Sargent, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lord, Mrs. Butler, and Mrs. Stoughton, all of New Haven; Miss Holland, Philadelphia; the Misses Butler and Miss Sargent, New Haven.
- Box 10—Mrs. F. B. Dexter, New Haven; Miss Elting, New York; Miss Fackler, New York; Miss Miller, Houston, Tex.; Miss Strong, Setauket, L. I.; J. W. Miller, 1900; E. B. Fackler, 1900.
- Boxes 11, 12, 13 unsold.
- Box 14—Mrs. Mittendorf, New York; Miss DuBois, Hudson, N. Y.; Miss Ensign, Simsbury, Conn.; Miss Stoddard, New Haven; S. Stoddard, '99; G. S. Mittendorf, '99.
- Box 15—Mrs. E. G. Stoddard, New Haven; Miss Stoddard, New Haven; Miss Rebecca Darlington, Pittsburg, Pa.; Miss Hay, Washington; Miss Alice Hay, Washington; L. E. Stoddard, '99; E. F. Hinkle, '99; F. S. Butterworth, '95; A. S. Hay, '98.
- Box 16—Mrs. C. T. Barney, Miss E. Terry, Miss A. E. Potter, all of New York; Miss H. Whitney, Boston; J. W. Barney, 1900; J. W. Cross, 1900; F. C. Havemeyer, 1900.
- Box 17—Mrs. Manny, Larchmont, N. Y.; Mrs. Adams, Orange, N. J.; Miss Samson, Boston; Miss Adams,