

"A UNION IN FACT."

Mr. Wells's Contribution to the Discussion of Debate.

To the Editor of YALE ALUMNI WEEKLY:

Sir:—The recent agitation in debating circles, especially the letters by "Debater" in your issue of February 1st, should interest all alumni to whom the fostering of Yale's intellectual life is dear. "Debater's" statement of facts is so assured as to carry with it an *ex officio* air; at the very least it must come from an undergraduate, who has studied the situation and whose finding possesses, therefore, considerable importance. He tells us: that "the Union itself is almost dead," but that there is a growing interest in debate, for "four new and flourishing debating clubs have been started within the past year and a half." "Debating attracts more and abler men than for years past." Well then, here is a problem, and "Debater" suggests a solution.

In the first place, the remedy offered is "the Union, as a central organization," of the various clubs. So far so good; but at the next step, that the Union should "consist merely of officers chosen from the various clubs," we demur. To us it seems that such a scheme sacrifices the important focal point, now supplied by the Union, granting always that that institution is only partially effective. Hardly could such a group of executive officers be called a debating organization at all. No; it is necessary not only that the interests in this branch of the University's activity be focussed, but that the central and representative society be vital.

The alternative proposition comes nearer to supplying these two deficiencies of the first plan. "Debater" would add the element of rivalry, of competition, the essential element now fatally lacking, by limiting the membership of the Union to "the best men of the various clubs," who could hold "monthly debates on subjects of real interest." Here again we demur, more strongly than before; that too in spite of the fact that the plan promises a society better focussed and more vital than the first proposal suggests; in spite, too, of the editorial approval of the WEEKLY. We object that the society so constituted would be undemocratic, would be open to grave dangers along the lines of college politics.

The comparison which your editorial makes between such a Yale Union and the Senior societies is particularly unfortunate. What future would there be for the present Sophomore debating clubs but to become mere Sophomore societies, hunters for places and college honors for the honor's sake. The present Sophomore societies are the pest of Yale life. For this we had hoped that such clubs as the "Wigwam" and the "Wranglers" had found the ultimate cure; how undesirable, then, to introduce another germ of the same old disease. Further, what would not the Senior societies, the best of them, between whom and a purer democracy the wretched Sophomore societies stand—what would they not give to be rid of the necessity of electing year after year the majority of their members from these cliques? Let it be granted that the debating clubs exist on an intellectual basis and so differ from the Sophomore societies whose *raison d'être* is social, yet there remains the danger of exclusiveness, of partiality, of the losing sight of crude but sound and promising material, which, though in less degree perhaps, at Yale, than elsewhere, is still far too likely to be overlooked.

But we had a remedy of our own to offer. We propose a *Yale Union* in fact as well as in name; a uniting, for the purposes of organization and of debate, of all the recognized clubs in the University, the "Kent Club," the "Wranglers," the "Sheffield Debating Club," the "Wigwam," the "Leonard Bacon Club," the "Junior Wigwam," the "Windy Club" (provided always that it change its name to one less hideous) and any other societies whose purpose is admitted to be debate alone; we suggest that membership in this Union be by clubs and not by individuals, at least that all members of clubs included in the Union be by that fact members of the Union. It is especially necessary with such a plan that debating teams representing their

respective clubs be pitted against one another in competitive debate, the "Wranglers" vs. the "Leonard Bacon Club," say, or the "Kent Club" vs. the "Sheffield Club." We should thus witness a sharp rivalry for the championship in debate, now, as we are informed, the one element lacking in the Yale Union. The clubs should meet three nights a month at their own respective centers, but on the fourth the Union should meet and hear a discussion by two rival teams on an important subject upon which the competitors will have had a month to prepare, and the successful discussion of which will bring honor to the winners.

Several objections will at once be urged. Clubs will be formed merely for the purpose of membership in this Union, and without any claims to real excellence in debate. In this case you must either (1) refuse to admit them and be called undemocratic, or (2) admit them and be burdened by them. We think decidedly that, in the first instance, the Union could judge fairly and reasonably of any society's standing, and, in the second, that the rivalry between clubs would remove the objection. Another objection, that success in the Union by club teams and by individuals may divert the attention of the best men, as at other colleges, from the intercollegiate debate, is more serious. But tradition, what there is of it, is at Yale in favor of the intercollegiate debate as the higher honor.

On the other hand, the advantages of democracy (in our judgment, the prerequisite) and of competition have been mentioned. There remains the advantage, not less great, that the various departments of the University will, by their representatives in an important branch of our intellectual life, have the chance to meet and to try conclusions. We shall thus further that end, whose accomplishment is likely to be the especial task of our next President, the participation by every department more and more in a common university life.

Yours very truly,
CHAUNCEY WETMORE WELLS.

Cornell University News.

Forty-four men came out to try for the Cornell University crew, at the call of Captain Fisher, Wednesday, Feb. 3, but only two of this number were members of last year's crew, Dalzell and Beardslee, bow and No. 6 respectively. There is plenty of good material in the College, however, and Coach Charles Courtney hopes to produce at least an average crew. Only gymnasium work will be undertaken at present.

At a meeting of the Cornell Athletic Council Monday night, Feb. 6, it was voted not to ratify the election of E. R. Sweetland to be Captain of the University Football Eleven. Sweetland was elected about a month ago to fill the place of Captain Reed, who had resigned. Although the charges of professionalism, which have been entered by Assistant Coach Fennell, do not seem to be well founded, the Athletic Council deemed it best to take the course it did, and so prevent even a breath of suspicion against Cornell's athletic purity. In commenting on the situation the Cornell *Sun* says: "It seems as if an infusion of Cornell spirit would go far toward clarifying the clouded athletic atmosphere and stop the infection before it spreads any further. It will be a sorry day for Cornell if the policy of splitting hairs is to be generally pursued."

Athletics and War.

The report of President Eliot, which has just been made public, contains some interesting figures going to disprove the popular impression "that high scholars in College are almost always men of poor physique, distinctly inferior in that respect to the average college student."

In reference to the "claim that the highly competitive athletic sports develop qualities which are exercised and tested in the work of the soldier or sailor," President Eliot reports that out of the 97 young men who enlisted from the five classes, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, and 1902, 14 are recognizable as athletes. In that is included men who rowed on a class crew or a Weld crew. From the five classes from 1887 to 1893, 10 men were recognizable as athletes out of 86 who enlisted. In the older

classes the proportion of athletes was decidedly small. "One excellent authority made the number of athletes on the whole list of 384 names to be 34. Another who included managers of teams, members of the shooting club, wrestlers and polo players, counted 42 recognizable athletes in the entire list of Harvard Volunteers."

President Eliot concludes as follows: "These figures do not indicate that the men who took part in the highly competitive athletic sports are on that account more inclined to enlist as soldiers or sailors than the ordinary student who is physically sound enough to pass the medical examination for the army or navy. It is probable that a taste for riding or shooting would do more to take a man into the army in time of war than a taste for football or baseball; and it is certain that skill in the management of boats or of machinery would tend much more to take a man into the navy than any skill in the highly competitive games. It has been supposed that football was especially adapted to training soldiers, but the facts seem to be that nothing can be more unlike actual fighting than the bodily collisions which take place between football players. In modern warfare no one seems to see his adversary, and the constant thought of the men in line of battle is to conceal or cover themselves and their weapons while advancing or waiting."

Shooting Match with Harvard.

The Yale Six-Shooter Club has arranged a team match with the Harvard Rifle and Pistol Club, the date being set for Saturday, April 15. The teams will consist of five men and each man will shoot six scores, using revolvers and standard American targets. The clubs will shoot on their own grounds, each club sending one representative to the other.

ANOTHER

BASE BALL

SEASON means another demonstration, on a thousand diamonds in all parts of America, of the position of leadership in the manufacture of equipments for the great game of America, and for all other sports, of

A. G. Spalding & Bros.,

Chicago. New York.

CHARLES T. PENNELL,

Successor to Wm. Franklin & Co.,

IMPORTING TAILOR,

40 Center St., New Haven, Conn.

California

.. via ..

SUNSET LIMITED

This palatial solid vestibuled train, the perfection of railway equipment, consists of Combination car, containing smoking parlor, barber shop and bath room.

Ladies' parlor and stateroom car, containing a large parlor and seven state rooms, which may be occupied singly, or en-suite.

Two double drawing-room, ten section sleeping cars and Dining car in which meals are served à la carte.

Commencing December 1st, '98

SUNSET LIMITED . . .

will be operated between New Orleans and San Francisco via Los Angeles, twice a week, leaving New Orleans Mondays and Thursdays, via the popular

SUNSET ROUTE . . .

of the *Southern Pacific Company*. No snow, no cold weather, no high altitudes, luxurious equipment, quick time, perfect road bed. These qualities serve to make *Sunset Route* and *Sunset Limited* unexcelled as a winter route to California.

New Orleans to Los Angeles 58 Hours.

New Orleans to San Francisco 75 hours.

For descriptive literature, rates and tickets, call on or address

E. E. CURRIER,

NEW ENGLAND AGENT,

No. 9 State Street, Boston.

EDWIN HAWLEY,

Asst. General Traffic Manager,

L. H. NUTTING, Eastern Passenger Agent,

349 Broadway and No. 1 Battery Place, New York City.

MILLER BROS STEEL PENS
Are AMERICAN & the BEST
MILLER BROS. GUTTERY CO. MILLER BROS. STEEL PENS
MERIDEN, CONN. 17K Erasers & Pocket Guttery



We make the engravings used in the "ALUMNI WEEKLY."

The C. W. Whittlesey Co.
281 State St.

Our line of Photographic Materials and Supplies is larger and more complete than ever before.

Our facilities for doing amateur work are unexcelled.

COLLEGE MEN

will find exceedingly comfortable and well kept quarters at a most reasonable price at

MILLER'S HOTEL

39 West 26th St., - New York City.

This house is patronized largely by Yale, Princeton, Cornell, Vassar, Wellesley, Smith and other Colleges, to the students of which special rates are made.

SEND FOR CIRCULAR.

CHARLES H. HAYNES,

Proprietor.