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CRITICISM OF A PRIZE AWARD.

The *News* feels called upon to express the undergraduate sentiment in regard to criticisms of the recent Ten Eyck contest which have appeared in the ALUMNI WEEKLY. It is this: that as it is well enough to criticize public speakers as one would criticize rowers or football players, so on the same principle it is wise to refrain from disclaiming the Ten Eyck winner's right to his victory as one would refrain from publicly objecting to the election of a football or crew captain. Both the Ten Eyck winner and the athletic captain are selected by competent judges. Some may take exception to the statement that the Yale Faculty are competent judges, which the *News* most certainly does not; but assuming that they are not competent, there are nicer ways of emphasizing this point than by slighting persons who certainly do not deserve it. It is not the judges you hit by such criticism. Undergraduate Yale is in hearty accord with the decision as rendered by the Faculty.—*Yale News Editorial.*

We regret that the *News* has so far overlooked the important fact in the TenEyck prize discussion. A considerate fear of injuring personal feelings has entirely obscured an issue of the very greatest importance to the entire University. To remove, however, the personal equation, let again be said, what already has been said in these columns as emphatically as possible: namely, that the essay, which won the prize, was an essay of literary merit so great as to be unusual in certain respects, and that it was presented to the audience in College Street Hall in a very creditable way. Every one agrees to this statement, and, what is more, everyone agrees to another statement, namely, that it was not an oration. That it could, in this form, win the prize, is a great tribute to its literary excellence and to the favorable impression made by its author. And when it is claimed, that to emphasize the point, that the TenEyck winner of this year did not present an oration, is to make any reflections on him or on his essay, we beg to say most respectfully that the contention is not reasonable.

The College has been left in doubt as to what the Faculty construe to be the object of that contest. There has been uncertainty before. The fact that a gentleman of Mr. Gleason's ability presented a literary essay instead of an

oration—and we know no reason to doubt that he would have done just as well with a pure oration as with an essay—indicates just how far afield have been many former decisions of the committees and the judges. It is now in order to make a protest and it is a particularly happy time to make it. If the winning piece had been of inferior intellectual or literary quality, it would have been very different.

The comparison chosen by the *News*, of the election of an athletic captain, is not well considered. The athletic captain is chosen after he has run the gauntlet, day in and day out and season after season, of the most relentless comment and criticism. When all has been said against him that is possible and he is not broken by it, but is stronger, then he is selected to lead. The process of preparation, through these fires, attests his fitness. And he is to be supported because the fortunes of his college are in his hand. But it is not a personal matter. It is the high and compelling necessity of loyalty,—the community's care for its future.

On the other hand, the decision of the TenEyck prize contest closes up, so to speak, a season of work, and, what is more, sets the standard for those who are to come after. If the standard set by the judges is such that everyone is left in doubt as to what the contest calls for and what Yale's idea of public speaking is, or, if to many it seems to be made clear that Yale public speaking is a matter of literary excellence rather than oratorical power, then we can conceive of no issue of more importance to the whole University. And we beg to remind the *News* and its constituency that that issue is not presented, until the decision is made. If public comment on the speaking is forbidden after the decision, then there can be no comment or criticism. Will this promote power in Yale platform work?

The *News*, unintentionally, we are sure, leaves an impression in regard to the criticism of the Faculty as judges for such a contest, which is not in accordance with the facts. The criticism of the judges began some college generations gone and has continued ever since. The WEEKLY took it up a month or more ago. The criticism will continue as long as the system is kept up.

What we most regret is the disposition to consider the winning of a prize of such importance as the TenEyck, a personal matter, whose meaning and relation to the University is not to be considered. Woe to Yale training for life when this is so. When a man goes on the stage, he goes before the public, and whether he wins or loses, he is a subject of public interest, and hence of public criticism.—provided he is good for anything. A look at the men who came on the platform at College Street Hall at the TenEyck prize contest this year, did not give the impression that they were unduly sensitive to proper comment on their work, and we do not think that any healthy Yale contestants in any kind of an event are thus sensitive. The other contestants of course concur in the decision and would undoubtedly prefer that it should not be discussed. But that isn't the point. It would be very much easier, of course, to say to them all that they did very well and to express only pleasure over the award. It is very much more to the point, however, to find out what this is all about, and try to point the matter towards more definite results for the good of all Yale. This we shall continue to do according to our best ability. We hope that the *News* will some day use its great influence directly upon these matters of the highest importance in the scheme of Yale education.

THE SOCIETY REPORT.

The report of the Conference Committee on Sophomore societies, which was printed in last week's issue of the WEEKLY, is, unless all reasonable signs fail, an important and conclusive chapter in one of the most interesting records of undergraduate life at Yale. It practically brings to an end,—for it does not seem possible at this writing that anything can prevent the final acceptance of the report and the execution of its recommendations,—a system whose mistakes have been growing clearer for a number of years and which had at last reached a point where a healthy community could not longer tolerate it. That the students themselves have effected this change through a conference and final agreement of parties on the two sides of a warm controversy, and that they have not sought or required the aid of either Faculty or alumni, is about the best thing that can be written about the Yale community of these last years of the century. It is a tribute to its wholesomeness, to its general loyalty, to its vigor and to its reasonableness, which it was almost too much, even the most hopeful said, to expect.

The University and the outside press and, indeed, all voices, have been silent for these last two months, while the committee have been conferring. It was the one desire of all hereabouts to see every obstacle removed, which would endanger the spirit of mutual confidence and concession. Now the matter comes again before the public, but apparently in its settled form.

Some will find that the reform has not gone far enough; others will criticize this or that detail. The plan recommended by the committee is probably not ideal, but it comes near enough to that to make any material criticism of the plan ill-considered. The minimum number in the Junior societies to be is not so great as most people want to see, but the maximum number is a reasonable one, and unless both the spirit and the letter of the agreement are violated, which we think is scarcely possible, the maximum will be reached in the near future and the three societies will take in seventy-five men. Of course it is possible that, under this condition of things, a fourth society on a competitive basis may be established. Some objections to forming an additional society, which exist while the smaller societies are in Sophomore year, disappear with these smaller societies in Junior year. As to the fraternities in Sophomore year, it seems reasonable to expect that a fourth one will enter the field in the near future. This will raise the total number of social opportunities of Sophomore year to more than twice what they are now.

However the details may work out, the main object of the change has been accomplished. Equal social opportunities are given to the largest number possible and conditions favor rather than threaten the social development of men who come to Yale unknown.

The meeting in the interest of a public bath house, arranged by the Neighborhood Club of Yale Hall, carried out so thoroughly and so successfully on Friday night, is only another indication of the wholesome, reasonable, vigorous and manly way Yale's Christian work is carried on. Yale Hall, cooperating with the best residents of the locality, is making the part of New Haven in which it is situated a better place to live in, and is working substantial advantage to those in whose behalf educated men are called upon to give their intelligent and discriminating and not condescending aid.

We take great pleasure in printing in full this week the essay of Mr. Arthur Huntington Gleason, Yale 1901, which won the TenEyck Prize. This is done not only because the competition was the subject of so much and such unusual interest this year, but because of the intrinsic merit of the piece itself.

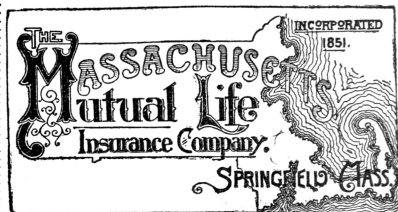
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