

PRESIDENT HADLEY'S VIEWS.

[Being extracts from his report for the year 1899-1900, presented to the alumni on Commencement Day.]

SOPHOMORE SOCIETIES.

A matter which, though now discussed chiefly in connection with the Academical Department, has great importance for the future reputation of Yale as a whole, is the secret society system. The growth in numbers of students attending the college has strained the old framework of college societies. When there were but a hundred and forty students in a class, two societies of thirty-five men each could enroll one-half of the students among their number,—substantially all whose pecuniary circumstances and social tastes rendered it important for them to become members. With classes of three hundred instead of a hundred and forty this condition of things has wholly changed. The difficulty has been partially met, but for various reasons could not be completely met, by the introduction of new societies side by side with the old. It was felt most acutely in Sophomore year because, owing to the abolition of the ancient Sophomore societies nearly a quarter of a century ago, the new ones which had grown up in their places were smaller and more secret than those of Junior year. When a very small number of men, barely a sixth of the whole class, were thus early elected to a coveted position from which all their fellows were excluded, the result was obviously and necessarily bad for many of those outside, and for the interests of the College as a whole. It tended to set the majority of a class in an attitude of antagonism to that minority who, in the interests of the University, should have been their leaders instead of their antagonists. The most concrete evidence of the evil of this state of things is seen in the election of non-society men to important offices in the gift of the class, not because they were the best men for the offices in question, but because they were not members of Sophomore societies.

Under these circumstances, strong pressure was brought to bear upon the Faculty for the abolition of these organizations, and a petition to that effect was presented by nearly all the non-society men in the Senior class. Although they fully recognized the existence of the evils, the members of the Faculty in general deemed it extremely inadvisable to take immediate and radical action. Mere abolition by act of the Faculty, without some clear public understanding as to what was to follow, seemed on the whole more likely to do harm than good. It might readily tend, as did similar action at Harvard more than a generation ago, to perpetuate the existence of these self-same societies in a less responsible form. Moreover, the evil was not of a kind which could readily be treated by Faculty edicts. The Sophomore societies themselves had violated no College law, and had done few specific things which could be made grounds for criticism against them. They were no more than a manifestation of an evil. The real evil could be reached only by voluntary action of the College as a whole.

The democratic spirit of Yale is to be maintained primarily by the students; secondarily by the public sentiment of the alumni behind the students; thirdly, and in relatively slight degree only, by the legislation of the Faculty. That body can do little more than provide that the general conditions shall be favorable to the maintenance of a sound public sentiment on these matters. At the crisis which the discussion has reached, the faculty has felt warranted in insisting that the control of the societies should be left for the moment in the hands of the upper classmen, who have had time for a more intelligent view of the factors of the problem than have the men who are just beginning the Sophomore year.

To go further than this would be simply to take the responsibility for the maintenance of Yale democracy out of the hands of the students, where it really belongs, because they and they alone have it in their power to keep it unimpaired. Only as a last resort, if it should become clearly and obviously apparent that the evils of the present system are to be handled in no other way, would it be wise to intervene by direct legislation. The members of the Faculty are to be commended for the moral courage which they have shown, in preferring to bear the impu-

YALE FRESHMAN CREW.

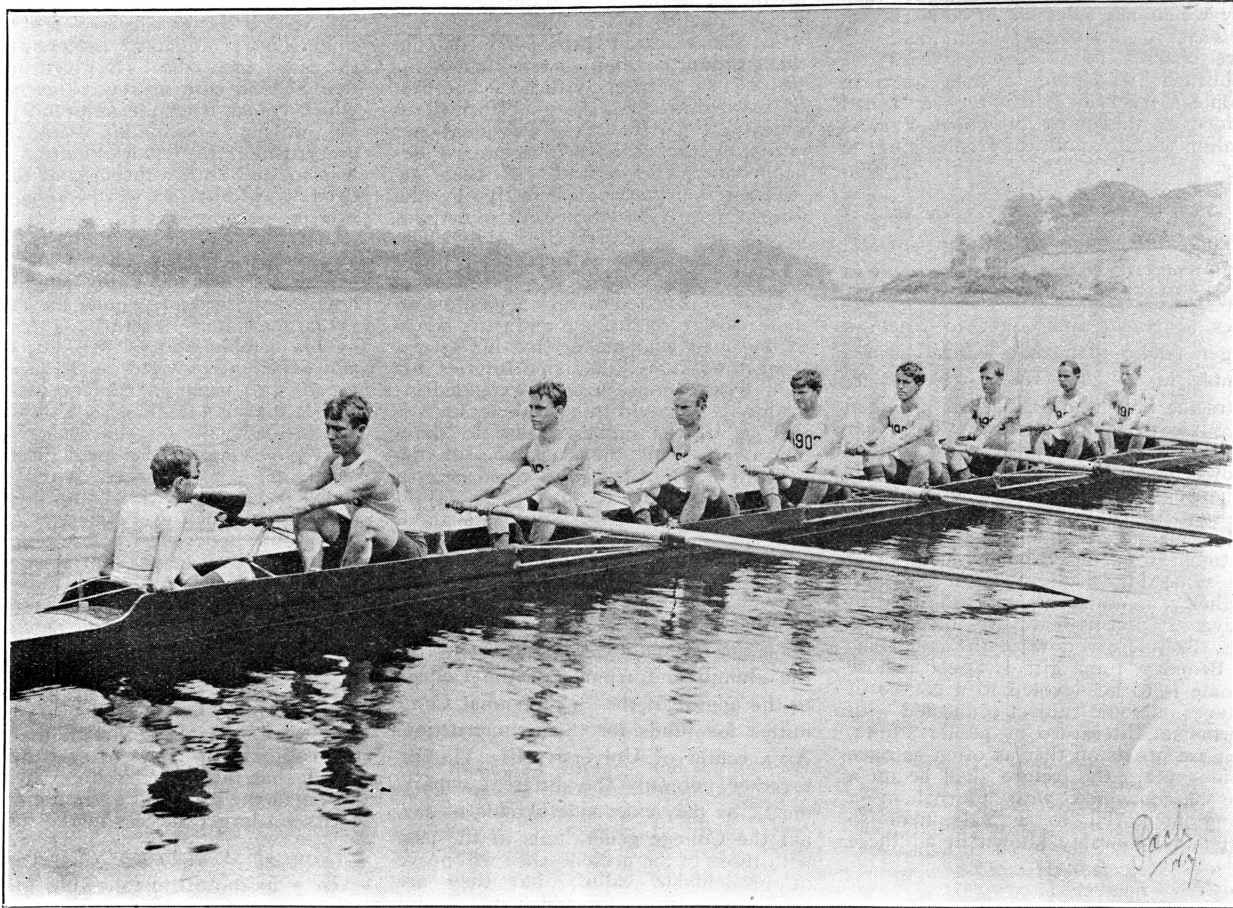


Photo by Pach.
Stroke, Bogue. 7, R. Schley, (capt.) 6, Sargent. 5, Brown. 4, Trumbull. 3, Hewitt. 2, Strong. bow, K. Schley.

tation of cowardice which has been cast upon them in this matter, rather than to pursue a course which would have been brave in appearance, but which would really have sacrificed the future to the present.

SOCIAL LIFE IN THE SCIENTIFIC SCHOOL.

The problem of social life and order among the students of the Scientific School is one which is engaging the thought of the authorities to an increasing degree. In the days of its infancy, this school was a place for specialists, imbued with zeal for work. Such men needed few rules of discipline, and their social life was left to take care of itself. But as the Sheffield Scientific School has become a college in the wider sense of the term, and as more students have resorted to it for a general education without that seriousness of professional aim which characterized their predecessors, the need for organized regulation has increased.

There are two agencies which at present exercise some control over the life of the Sheffield student outside of his purely official relations. One is the dormitory system which has been established by the several societies; the other is the work of the Sheffield Branch of Yale Young Men's Christian Association. But the time has come when questions of social life and dormitory life must be taken up on a larger scale, with plans which will reach the student more generally, and do away with that danger of isolation and irresponsibility which besets the freshman, left to himself in the midst of a city. The destruction of the wooden house on College Street which had furnished the very inadequate quarters in which the Association had been doing its excellent work, has brought to the attention of its friends the need of a really worthy building for a center of the religious and social life of the Scientific School; and there is reason to hope that their wishes will meet with a prompt and generous response.

THE MEDICAL SCHOOL CHANGE.

Among the professional schools, it is the Medical Department which can report the most striking change. The purchase of a large and well situated block of land adjoining the Hospital marks the beginning of a time when this institution will be able to offer such facilities to its students as it never has before; and

it is confidently hoped that the Bi-centennial anniversary will see that land occupied by one or more buildings adapted to modern needs. The appointment of Dr. Otto G. Ramsay, of Johns Hopkins, to the chair of Gynecology, is not only valuable as strengthening the teaching force of the School in general, but preëminently so in paving the way for a closer possible cooperation between School and Hospital than has existed in the past.

The disinterested devotion of the Faculty of the Medical School, in the face of discouraging circumstances, is at last beginning to reap well-deserved fruit. The School stands to-day intellectually as it never stood before. Material prosperity can hardly fail to follow.

ADVANCE IN LAW.

In the instruction furnished by the Faculty of this School, the most important and far-reaching change is the offer of a choice between two law courses in the Senior year of the Academic Department. One of these is intended to meet the needs of those who study the elements of law as part of a general education; the other is intended as a basis for subsequent study in a professional school here or elsewhere. By thus differentiating their courses, the members of the Law Faculty enable themselves to meet thoroughly the needs of two different classes of men which were so far distinct that it was difficult to handle them together. It is hoped that the outcome of this experiment will be not only a saving of time and increase of thoroughness of professional study among those who intend to make the law their life work, but also a basis of closer relations between these two departments, and perhaps a model for such relations between other departments of the University as a whole.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL DRAWS CLOSER.

This same tendency toward closer union is seen in the prospectus of the Theological Department for the coming year. Hitherto the students in the Yale Divinity School have been—officially, at any rate—kept by themselves. If they utilized the services of teachers in other departments it was a personal matter, outside the cognizance of the Theological Faculty. Under the new system, provision is made whereby the candidate for the ministry may learn, and

is encouraged to know, those principles of history and sociology and economics which the courses of the Graduate School offer in such large abundance. The reforms in the system of beneficiary aid which is being seriously agitated will, in conjunction with this widening of the curriculum, tend to make the graduate of the Yale Divinity School in the future a man of wider Christian influence, because he will be in an increasing degree a man of the world also.

PRACTICAL MUSIC INSTRUCTION.

In the reports of the Schools of Art and of Music there is also found this salutary urgency for a closer connection with the life of the students of other departments. It is specially urged that there should be chance for the recognition of the teaching of practical music as part of a college course. Without underrating the difficulties in so doing, or prejudging a final adjustment of the case, it is safe to assure the members of these departments of the cordial sympathy of Yale in this endeavor. Every effort will meantime be made to provide the School of Music with quarters more adequate than those which it enjoys at present.

A NOTABLE COURSE OF LECTURES.

Through the generosity of Mr. William E. Dodge of New York City, a gift of \$30,000 has been received by the University, whose income is to be devoted to a course of lectures on The Responsibilities of Citizenship. In the words of Mr. Dodge's own letter, he "desires to make a gift to the University, for the purpose of promoting among its students and graduates, and among the educated men of the United States, an understanding of the duties of Christian citizenship, and a sense of personal responsibility for the performance of those duties." And it is his further desire "that the income of the fund should be paid each year to a lecturer of distinguished attainments and high conception of civic responsibilities; who shall deliver a course of lectures on a topic whose understanding will contribute to the formation of an intelligent public sentiment, of high standards of the duty of a Christian citizen, and of habits of action to give effect to these sentiments and these standards." The sum thus placed at the disposal of the Corporation should enable Yale University each year to secure a lecturer who will be not