

### The Rep. Contest, Should a Debate be Substituted?

The time is drawing near when the societies should elect the men who shall represent them in the Oratorical Contest at Commencement. It is indeed a high honor conferred upon them who are chosen, because they not only represent themselves, but they stand for the literary ability of the societies and the University. This contest, as generally understood, exists for two reasons: first it stimulates individual and original effort and investigation in society work, secondly: it creates a spirit of self-reliance which is essential to the fullest success not only while in College, but in the wider field of the world. Hence being a "representative" involves a deeper meaning than merely contesting for a prize. Now if this contest originates from the principles which have been mentioned, then it ought to be the fullest expression of those principles. It ought to test originality to the utmost extent and thus develop a true spirit of self-reliance which is far removed from over-confidence and proverbial conceit.

At this point the question confronts us is an Oratorical Contest the best means of promoting original research and engendering self-reliance? Is it the fullest expression of these two principals?

In our University the representatives are usually chosen from the Junior Class, and while the best men are always chosen, yet in most cases the men have not yet formed an analytic habit of thought, hence often-times a man requires three months to select his subject and this leaves him only two in which to write his speech. But an oration if it be, thoughtful, instructive and successful must grow and not be "hatched."

Usually some one phase of a question is studied and the mind does not go down to the root of the matter, where by its relating power it can harmonize seemingly contradictory issues, and thus insure a more symmetrical development. If this be so, then the "Rep" Contest is not the fullest expression of originality and independence.

What then would come nearer to our standard? We believe that a debate would fulfill the conditions which have been laid down. A debate would incite the new members of the societies to more systematic effort. It would create a healthy spirit of competition and desire to excel which is the genesis of earnest society work. Why would not an Oratorical Contest bring about the same result? Every man has some idea of debate. It is not difficult to find numbers of men who can argue a question successfully, but when you mention "making a speech" they immediately lose interest in the conversation. So in the societies good men who would put forth earnest effort if a debate were inaugurated are not attracted by an Oratorical Contest, hence the only incentive to duty is the fine. Such aimless effort is neither beneficial to the individual nor to the society. We believe that a debate would not only be more valuable to the society, but also to the individual, because in preparing for effective argument the various aspects

of a problem must be studied. Every point must be tested and fitted into its proper place. The advantages or disadvantages of the opposition must be well understood, and appreciated. The debater must be ready to adapt himself to any line of argument connected with the question and in order to do this he must thoroughly understand his query. He must form a circle of thought, and this requires steady individual effort.

We believe that if the debate is adopted that those Juniors who take part would thereby be more fully prepared to deliver graduating orations which would be doubly impressive and effective.

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