

Alma Mater business short in order to make room for debates, etc., we enter an earnest and emphatic protest. Like sparring, such speech-making is good for the wind, but it is questionable if this be our greatest lack. We firmly maintain, whoever says otherwise, that actual business, properly conducted, is the best possible discipline in reading, thinking and forcible speaking. The student who cannot find ideas on the subjects of common interest, weekly discussed at the Alma Mater Society, may conclude that the gift of utterance is denied him. If we supplement this by an occasional debate or written essay, all is done but what the individual himself can do.

The practice of debating or speaking on "stock" subjects undoubtedly does develop sophistic accomplishments, and these are always dangerous. The universities of the Western States revel in such oratorical exhibitions, and their productions remind us of MacAulay's caustic remarks on prize poems and prize oxen. They develop a pretty word fluency which is fatal to true eloquence. If Ingersoll be our ideal orator, by all means go on; but university men should seek a more classic shrine than this cave of the winds.

Now this is all true of inter-collegiate debates, but they have obvious advantages as well. They unite sister colleges by actual contact, and so afford an opportunity of comparing and contrasting different types of college men. For here, as elsewhere, we develop along different lines, and an occasional brush with other students reveals our weakness and perhaps our strength too. It excites a generous rivalry, which pursued on worthy lines always has a beneficial effect, either by well-earned success or manfully accepted defeat. In a continued rivalry, victory cannot be expected to remain long with either party.

Knox and Queen's feel a closer bond to-day because of their friendly contest, and a similar one might profitably be arranged for, with Toronto University or McGill, another year. Again let us repeat a warning, an annual contest in football or other athletic sports is desirable, but not an annual debate. Here the art is not so natural nor so fine and therefore more open to prostitution—and even football can be degraded by too frequent and keen competition. Once a year is too often, but once in ten years is too seldom.

\* \* \*

President Cleveland, by his rashness, has called forth an expression of public opinion which reveals how alien to the best thought of the day is the notion of war between the United States and Great Britain. A noble example of this is the appeal of British authors to their American confreres, which

illustrates also the unifying and peace-loving spirit of modern English Literature. Among the 1,300 who signed the appeal are Sir W. Besant, Jno. Ruskin, Jno. Morley, Hall Caine, Rider Haggard, Sir Edward Arnold, Thos. Hardy, Blackmore, Black and Austin. We quote one of their arguments: "If war should take place between England and America, English Literature would be dishonoured and disgraced for a century to come. Patriotic songs, histories of defeat and victory, records of humiliation and disgrace, stories of burning wrongs and unavenged insult—these would be branded deep in the hearts of our people. They would make it impossible to take up again the former love and friendship. For the united Anglo-Saxon race that owns the great names of Cromwell, Washington, Nelson, Gordon, Grant, Shakespeare and Milton, there is such a future as no other race has had in the history of the world; a future that will be built on the confederation of sovereign states, living in the strength of the same liberty."

\* \* \*

Tradition says that some years ago there was a golden age of music at Queen's, but that time is so remote that even our veteran students entered in time to catch only a faint gleam of its departing radiance. But to these few how questionable is the pleasure of having to listen to such inharmonious cries as "Give him the axe," "We're on the bum to-day," etc., in which a degenerate age delights. Last year, though perhaps the darkest in our musical annals, witnessed the rise of the "Phœnix" in the shape of resurrected Glee and Banjo Clubs, albeit so very delicate and retiring a Phœnix, that some sceptics pronounced it no Phœnix at all.

Not long ago one of our oracles remarked that Queen's in her development was in a stage of transition from the bright, joyous and unthinking spirit of the nineteenth century to the philosophic and critical spirit of the twentieth century, and that for the future our popular compositions would be of the nature of adaptations of the words of Kant and Hegel to the music of Wagner. Though rather strongly put, we must admit that there is more than a sprinkling of truth in the observation, but we also believe that the carolling of Kant and Hegel need not crowd out other music altogether. It is true that our prevailing spirit is analytic, but that is only the mere reason for a determined effort to preserve the artistic side from entire suppression. Those critics must also bear in mind that a spirit which has so thoroughly died out, or has lost so completely all effective organization, cannot be revived at a moment's notice, but that abundance of time and patience is required, not only to develop the crude material, but even to get students sufficiently inter-