

Comment and Criticism

The Rugby Dance has again "come and gone," but it has not passed without failing to perpetuate itself in many delightful memoirs such as always gather round that event. The Gymnasium was a perfect blaze of glory on the evening of the auspicious event and the beautiful decorations were a subject of general comment. Again the working abilities of this year's directorate have been demonstrated, and to the executive as well as to the various sub-committees much credit is due. Everyone will be glad to know that this most popular dance, besides being the occasion of such general enjoyment, has materially assisted the committee in lifting the heavy incus of debt resting upon them since the Annual Games.

Though the Rugby Dance officially ends the season for the pigskin game, yet it continues to be exhibited in all its stern realities in the series of games for the Mulock Cup. The series has as usual attracted quite a number of interested spectators, and it may be said quite truthfully, that almost every one of the games has been a really good sample of Rugby—that is, as good a sample as a ground covered by ice and snow will permit. The surprises so far have been the defeat of the Seniors by the presumptuous Naughty Twos, and the unexpected strength developed by the team representing the Final Meds. A hot game for the championship is a safe prophecy.

I never knew until the other day that a great English poet had described a Mulock Cup game—accidentally, no doubt, and yet accurately. Here's the passage; I leave it to the readers of TOPICS to locate it.

"Oaths, insult, filth, tremendous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, labouring of the lungs

In the close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying and voices of the dead."

But another important series was commenced last week when the new Intercollegiate Debating Union commenced operations and brought off two of the contests in the first round. If one may judge by the attendance at these debates and the interest manifested in them, the League is not a mere ephemeral production, but has come to stay. And, indeed, there is every reason to hope that such is the case; for the spirit of friendly emulation such as arises between College and College will find in these Inter-Collegiate debates an opportunity for manifestation at once dignified and appropriate. We should be just as proud—nay far prouder—to see our own College triumph in the contest of brain as in the struggle of feet or hands. Apart from this the League is likely to serve two useful purposes: first, the establishment and maintenance of closer relations among the many colleges of the city, and secondly, the cultivation of a literary and oratorical spirit on a broad scale in the academic circles of Toronto. The oratorical feature is secured by that rule of the Union which assigns 25% for style in speaking. The officers are to be congratulated upon the evident interest centred in the two opening debates.

A feature of the "Lit" which last year was suffered to lapse into obscurity is to be revived on Friday evening next. I refer to the Mock Parliament. There could be no better training in impromptu speaking than that afforded in such a meeting provided it is properly conducted, and I understand that no effort will be spared to have it so. The Premier, Mr. A. McDougall will bring before the country an interesting legislative programme, and a hot debate on the Address will undoubtedly characterize Friday evening's proceedings.

I take this opportunity of again bringing to the notice of the undergraduates the University Dinner which will be held in the Gymnasium on the 16th inst. The price has been made as low as possible, in order to meet the well-known financial stringency in the student pocket, but not too low to prevent the serving of a first-class dinner, such as will do honor to the University. It has been further decided not to insist on the dress-suit feature usually in vogue at such entertainments; the matter of dress will thus be left to the discretion of the individual undergraduate. It is hoped, however, that as many as possible will wear that peculiarly academic surcoat—the gown.

Dinners are now one of the recognized features of social life, and there is no place where they can be made more enjoyable than at a University, where we all know and are known so widely. If anyone doubts the truth of this let him come and see.

SPECTATOR.

The regular meeting of St. Charles Lit, which was to have taken place Dec. 4th, was postponed until Dec. 11th, when essays will be read by Messrs. Redmond, Murphy, Curtin and Simons. These are young men of extraordinary literary abilities, and a very interesting meeting may be expected.

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OSGOODE--McMASTER DEBATE

On Saturday evening last the beautiful Convocation Hall at Osgoode Hall was crowded to the doors with men and maidens who had assembled as the guests of the Osgoode Legal and Literary Society, under whose auspices the second debate in the Inter-College Debating Union was being conducted. The contest was between representatives from Osgoode Hall and McMaster University. The McMaster students, adorned with College colors attended in a body to inspire their debaters, while the young lawyers scattered through the audience assisted their men in a similar way.

After the regular business of the society had been transacted, and Mr. Matchin had delighted the audience with a well-rendered solo, the president, Mr. W. D. McPherson, announced the subject of debate:—"Resolved, That the permanent retention of the Philippine Islands by the United States would be advantageous to both the United States and the Philippines."

Messrs. H. R. Smith and Anson Spotton, B.A., of Osgoode Hall, appeared for the affirmative, while the negative was supported by Messrs. A. B. Cohoe, B.A., and S. E. Grigg, of McMaster University.

The referees were Dr. Badgeley, Provost Welch and Mr. Emerson Coatsworth, Jr. Mr. Smith opened the argument for the affirmative by showing that, historically, Britain had been the great colonizing power of modern times, and from this he argued that the United States were a parallel in that they were Anglo-Saxons. The Anglo-Saxons were above all others successful in colonizing. They also respected constitutional principles, which fitted them for the task. He then refuted several arguments which might be advanced against the retention of the Philippines, but remarked that he would not thus continue, lest he might be giving hints to his opponents.

In concluding, he showed the benefits which the United States would reap by their retention. The colonizing impulse of Anglo-Saxons is irresistible and now a last chance is given the United States to acquire colonies in the Eastern world. They would act as a basis of military supply, so necessary in modern times, and would also be a basis of commercial activity—a thing of the greatest importance to-day in the contest for commercial supremacy.

Mr. Cohoe mounted the rostrum, donned in his toga, and for twenty minutes held the attention of his hearers, while Ciceroian periods rolled from his lips amid the applause of his admirers. Having dealt with the arguments of Mr. Smith he proceeded to show how futile it was for the United States to try to control the Philippines. Seventy-five thousand men must be sent to subdue them, and then a standing army and large civil service would be necessary to control the islands. Disease, moreover, would play havoc with the soldiers. This added territory would be vulnerable, and thus a greatly increased armament would be necessary, entailing enormous expense and eventually an increased pension list. The natural resources of the islands were great, but an "open door" had to be kept, so that the United States merchants would lose rather than gain. By this retention cheap labor would be brought on the United States market which would be ruinous. Then if the United States mingles in European affairs she will never be free from war and its attendant evils. He concluded by summing up the evils, social and political, that would come upon the United States as a result of this step.

To Mr. Spotton fell the honor of making the most scholarly argument of the evening. He argued it was a moral duty for the United States to retain the islands and not to consider the expense. Armament is the product of modern times and shows superiority. It is the duty of the United States to equip herself and step out and help others. In this a navy will not be a disadvantage. He regarded "America for the Americans" as petty and selfish. She has as much interest in Asia as in S. America, where she applies the Monroe Doctrine. The rebels were fighting for justice and would be peaceful under American rule, while as independents they would be torn by internecine strife. The United States now being in control could alone colonize them. Since it was for the advantage of the Philippines to fall into the hands of the United States, there was a moral duty cast on the United States to retain them. He held it was a piece of national missionary work, and when his opponents from McMaster proved this would be a failure, they must admit their own missionary work was a failure. In concluding he argued that the Islands were at the back door of the United States, and by the retention of this strategic point the trade of China would be under their control.

Mr. Grigg argued that the United States would lose prestige among the nations by leaving her high station and becoming a land-grabbing power. The great powers are now camped around the China Sea, and by going in there the United States would be involved in European disturbances. The Monroe doctrine had been the bulwark to the United States and ought not now to be abandoned. By annexing the islands she would be more vulnerable and so more silent on international questions through fear of dismemberment. The baneful effects of annexation on the Constitution and Government of the United States would be great, while the moral and social life would be contaminated. Militarism, now a stranger to the new world, would follow increased armament. Mr. Grigg's argument was concluded by a reference to Alaska, where the United States had failed to justify the claims made by the affirmative as to their power to colonize.

Mr. Smith made a few remarks in reply. While the referees were preparing their judgment Mr. Matchin rendered two solos,

and Mr. Brophy, of University College, recited, to the amusement of all. Mr. McPherson then announced that the referees gave judgment in favor of the negative, one referee dissenting. The National Anthem was sung and the audience departed. The McMaster students lined up and proceeded towards Bloor street, while the Osgoode men went home content to let the Philipinos settle their own disputes.

ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE

The second try for the Mulock Cup was made on Friday last against the Senior Meds, resulting in a victory for the Meds by a score of ten to nothing; and although our Rugby men felt somewhat sore over their defeat, they were loud in praise as to the way they were treated by their opponents. The medical men are gentlemen to a man, and although playing for a coveted trophy did not forget that sense of manliness and honor which is characteristic of the ideal football player of the Intercollegiate League. The referee, Mr. Alexander, by his impartiality at every stage of the game, has won a place in the hearts of our boys which time will not easily efface.

"We have only left to say" that we'll meet some other day, when we'll not need a sleigh to draw the men away.

The Rev. Fr. Provincial, who returned Tuesday last after a four months' sojourn abroad, left yesterday for L'Assumption College, Sandwich, where he will spend the rest of this week.

The sole topic under debate at present is the forming of an Alumni. In all probability the issue will be developed in the infancy of '99.

The first dance of the season took place Friday night in the Recreation hall. This is one of the many amusements in which the boys took special delight. The orchestra, under the leadership of L. Staley, promise to furnish the very latest music this year.

Mr. McGrath—He was sleeping like an angel about 5:30 a.m.

Frankie Martin—He struck him in self-defence.

Owney played his usual game Friday—downed his man.

Oysters were served on the upper flat on Saturday, room 4-11-44.

The Philosophers will henceforth indulge in weekly conferences. This is a new institution in the class and one which seems highly agreeable to its members.

Mr. Duffy, of the Philosophic Department, was under cover during the week owing to a severe cold. His friends were all smiles to see him about again on Monday.

Mr. Nugent is one of the late arrivals at this College, and has entered the commercial department.

St. Michael's Lit will convene again on Saturday next. On that evening a mock trial will come off. The prosecuting attorney is J. E. Lynott, while Chas. Duffy will take up the defence. K. Hart will assume the perilous situation of the prisoner. J. Noonan and Cunningham will constitute the chief witnesses. This should be a very spirited trial, since the attorneys are exceptionally clever and loquacious young gentlemen. The prisoner is indeed the soul of wit, and the witnesses possess a goodly share of common sense and cunning.

Mr. P. McCue has been appointed to succeed Mr. McPeak, who last year acted in capacity of assistant infirmaryman.

The regular meeting of St. Michael's Lit was held on Sunday, the 4th inst. The meeting was very largely attended owing to the interest which was taken by all in the coming debate. At 5 p.m. all the members had arrived and taken their usual seats. After the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, and the regular order of business had been carried on, the desks were cleared for action, and the battle royal began, in the form of a debate, the subject of which was: Resolved, "That the United States was justified in carrying armed intervention into Cuba." All concerned showed, by their eloquent and syllogistic speeches, that they had given the subject deep study. The affirmative put forth some very strong points, but they were not sufficiently strong to convince the judge that the United States were justified in armed intervention. The negative gave evidence of being old and forcible debaters, and by their flood of convincing points succeeded in carrying off the victory.

The Dramatic Association has decided to produce "Damon and Pythias," and the date set down is the 15th December. This play needs but little introduction more than the mere mention of its taking place, for the production is pronounced a good one and should draw a good house. The boys have hitherto proven themselves worthy of the public patronage in this line, and the coming event promises not only to equal but even to surpass all former productions. Many of the old students will figure in the prominent parts of this play, while E. Bradley, who is by no means a *novus homo* in histrionics, will be seen in the leading female role. His impersonation of the fair Calanthe in this production is highly commendable.

J. H.—What causes the explosion of gases? Dan. really believes he sees the clock.

Don't forget the evening of the 9th, for that's the time when Knox hopes to win the laurel from Vic. in the Intercollegiate debate.

Prof. McFayden delivered an address on Thursday evening last at the Normal Convocat. The address was a masterpiece on "The Use of Method in Study."

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VARSITY MEETS TRINITY IN DEBATE

He asserted that nations great in war will possess those qualities which will make it great in other activities. In proof of this claim he quoted the case of the children of Israel, who in their wars with Egypt had become a welded nation, whose unity at the present day, in spite of their scattered condition, is unparalleled in the annals of history. Egypt, also, who had laid the foundations of art and science, was a nation of warriors and was great only so long as she was warlike. Rome, again, the greatest example of all, to whom the modern world owes everything in the way of laws and institutions, was an *excellence* warlike nation. And, still again, the Crusades might be quoted in support of his contention. They had put new life into Christianity, had opened the East to trade and commerce, and had brought the West into contact with the then civilized world. Coming down to more recent history, he instanced the beneficial effects of the Napoleonic wars in introducing in the place of the Feudal System a new order of things which resulted in a vigorous impetus to science and art, while Spain has in the recent Hispano-American war received a new lease of life from the trouncing she has just received from our neighbors. He subscribed to his opponent's objection that the expense incident to the maintenance of the army and navy was a serious drain upon the resources of the nation, but considered it more desirable to have the drain than to have no nation to draw upon. In regard to the effect of war upon the individual he reiterated his leader's sentiment that it brings out the noblest qualities of mankind. This world is no Utopia. Men will fight to the end of time, *per contra* the peace proposal of the Czar.

Mr. Anderson, in support of Varsity's fair name, expressed himself crushed under the weight of the seemingly formidable arguments of the Trinity orators. He declared his intention of following the line of argument pursued by his leader, and expressed his belief that the question was an ideal one, and ought to be decided upon principle. Specific cases could not prove the proposition. The question to be considered, he thought, was whether war as a general influence is beneficial. As a beneficial influence war could be reduced to but two possibilities, viz., that war is inherently good and necessary, and that it is good only when its ultimate purpose is the ameliorization of civilization. Nations nowadays regard war as a calamity, as is shown by the striving of England and the United States for Anglo-Saxon unity, and the disinclination of Germany to go to war. The Czar's peace proposal is, moreover, an argument against war. War is not a necessary link in the chain of civilization, nor is it the best means of attaining the ideal to be found in beholding. The men who were the worthy exponents and the pioneers of civilization were the Livingstones, the Gordons and the Mackays, who were for quiet influence, and not for annihilation. The very construction of weapons of warfare was in favor of disarming war of its most characteristic features. By international agreement the use of grape shot and explosives had been relinquished. The reason for this manifest desire for peace lies in the fact that nations recognize the fearful havoc wrought by the woes and miseries of war. The Napoleonic wars had deprived civilization of the beneficial possibilities of three millions of human lives. Mr. Anderson claimed that there was honor and courage apart from war and denied most positively that the abolition of war would be followed by the ruin of national life and character. Let the money that is used for war be applied in the interests of education, art and science; let the idea of the Gospel have play and the swords be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks.

At the close of the debate, while the referees, Mr. Byron E. Walker, Mr. Emerson Coatsworth, Jr., and Rev. Professor MacFayden were arriving at a division, Mr. Kirkpatrick favored the assembly with another reading from Eugene Field. This was supplemented by a chorus rendered by the Trinity Glee Club. The judges, who had by this time made their reappearance, declared through Provost Welch that their unanimous verdict was that the debate be awarded to Varsity. This announcement was greeted with a volley of cheers, and the College yell of the Varsity contingent, who retired with elated hearts and trudged the distance from Trinity with light and airy footsteps.

Remember the S. P. S. dinner next Friday. The arrangements for a good time, are as usual, perfect.

KNOX COLLEGE

Several of the students attended the Normal School conversation last Thursday evening. George and Gillis have been smiling ever since.

What's the matter with our steward? He's all right! Who says so? Everybody! Why? He plays the bag-pipes.

Committee meetings for the "At Home" on December 10th are the order of the day. The liberality of the subscription list means the best that can be procured to make that meeting second to none.

Rev. J. McP. Scott addressed the conference on Saturday last.

Rev. T. Rogers, B.A., has resigned his charge in Georgetown, and is again spending a few days in his Alma Mater.

Mr. J. G. Cheyne has unfortunately been obliged at length to give up academic work for this year. He will take a year's rest before resuming work. *Nil desperandum*, Jim.

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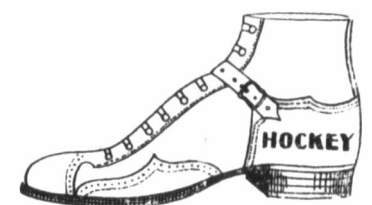
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