

and no debate was held until 1821, when the society decided "That the Americans were justified in resisting the taxes imposed them by the British Parliament." It will be seen that the limits of debateable subjects had been extended to the year 1800. There was not much difficulty in evading this rule. Motions were introduced in proper form, *e.g.*, "That parliamentary reform was desirable at the end of last century," but the discussion, with the exercise of very little care, could be made to include current controversies. This restriction was soon abandoned, and full freedom of debate granted to the society, which has since passed motions in favour of abolishing Proctors without any interference.

There are records and traditions of many interesting debates in the past history of the society. On one occasion, for instance, it was moved "that the constitution of America was more favourable to the liberties of the people than that of England." Praed, Cockburn and others had spoken in favour of the American constitution, and seemed to have won the house to their opinions, when Lytton rose, and by a very eloquent speech completely turned the tide of the whole debate, the decision giving a majority of seventy-two against the motion. W. M. Praed gives in an unpublished squib an account of the society, and one of its debates on the subject of Reform, from which we give the following extracts:

The Union Club of rhetorical fame
Was held at the Red Lion inn;
And there never was Lion so perfectly tame
Or who made such a musical din.
'Tis pleasant to snore at a quarter before
When the chairman does nothing in state,
But 'tis heaven, 'tis heaven, to waken at seven
And pray for a noisy debate.

Lytton is thus described as rising to oppose the motion.

Then the Church shakes her rattle, and sends forth to battle
The terror of Papist and Sinner,
Who loves to be seen as the modern Mæcenas
And asks all the poets to dinner.

Next but one Macaulay rises:

But the favourite comes with his trumpets and drums,
And his arm and his metaphors crossed,
And the audience, O dear! vociferate Hear!
Till they're half of them deaf as a post.

Then follows a summary of his speech.

Oratoric,
Metaphoric,
Similes of wondrous length,
Illustrations—Conflagrations
Ancient Romans—House of Commons
Clever Uriel and Ithuriel,
Good Old King, everything.

In 1829 a deputation consisting of Monckton, Milnes, Sunderland and Arthur Hallam went over to the sister society, at Oxford, to contend for the superiority of Shelley as a poet, over Byron. They were entertained by Milnes, Gaskell, Sir Francis Doyle and Gladstone. At the debate the Cambridge men spoke first, and no Oxford man rising, Wilberforce, the President, was about to put the question when Manning rose and delivered a speech which fully maintained the reputation of Oxford. Cardinal Manning many years afterwards gave his reminiscences of the debate. "I can well remember the irruption of the three Cambridge orators. We Oxford men were precise, orderly, and morbidly afraid of excess in word or manner. The Cambridge oratory came in like a flood into a mill-pond. Both Monckton, Milnes and Arthur Hallam took us back by the boldness and freedom of their manner. But I remember the effect of Sunderland's declamation and action to this day. It had never been seen or heard before among

us; we cowered like birds and ran like sheep. I acknowledge that we were utterly routed." The Cardinal was too modest. The writer had the opportunity of hearing Lord Houghton tell the history of their visit to Oxford at a luncheon of ex-Presidents of the Union, held in Cambridge at the laying of the foundation stone of the new wing, and he spoke of Manning's speech in the highest terms, both for its eloquence and argument. Of Sunderland he said then, what he had said before, at the opening of the society's buildings in 1866, that he was by far, the greatest orator that he had ever heard, and must have risen to great fame if he had lived. It was, we believe, more than fifty years after this visit before similar visits were again paid, but now it has become a regular practice for deputations to visit the sister society every year in the May term and for these visits to be returned. To the cordial and hospitable reception such visitors receive the writer can testify from his own experience.

The Debates of the Society are held every Tuesday evening, in Term time, at 7 o'clock. The mover of the motion sits at the end of the bench to the President's right, and his opponent immediately opposite him. When these two speakers have concluded, the debate is open to all members, and if the subject be of general interest there is often keen competition to catch the eye of the President, who is generally very careful not to see the men who have established their positions as bores until the debate is far advanced. When the speakers have been exhausted the opener of the debate replies, and then the division is taken on very similar lines to these in the House of Commons, tellers being appointed and counting the members as they file out through separate doors. Members are at liberty after a certain hour, to record their votes in a book without waiting for a division at debates, but not at the meetings for private business. As a rule the debates are very orderly and decorous, but sometimes there is great excitement. The President is armed with absolute power of expulsion from the house, or fining, and strong and willing arms have been required, on more than one occasion, to enforce his decisions. But an exercise of this authority is of rare occurrence, and for any abuse of his power the President is liable to impeachment, for which proper methods are provided.

Great interest is taken by members in the private business of the society, and some of the best speaking is heard there. The society is entirely self-governing, the officers have to submit all their proposals, after due notice, to the whole body of members. At these meetings the subjects discussed are of immediate interest to all there present, and as many of them involve the expenditure of large sums of money it is well that they should be closely criticised. In the past the question of opening the rooms on Sunday divided the house strongly for many years, but that has been finally settled in favour of Sunday opening. Of late years a party has grown up in favour of developing the society on ordinary club lines and eager and exciting have been the discussions on the subject of introducing billiard tables and a luncheon room. As a rule all these questions, if they are of great interest, have to go to a poll, and the votes on either side are counted by hundreds. As all members who have paid a certain number of terminal subscriptions are life members, there is a strong conservative element in the society and changes are not easily made. Any changes in the rules or constitution requires a two-thirds majority. At these private business meetings obstruction is by no means unknown, and the writer has a vivid recollection of one private business meeting at which certain proposals he brought forward, on behalf of the officers were met with such persistent opposition that the house sat