

THE WORLD'S LETTER BAG.

The "Variety" Boys and the Public Debate.

Editor World: Can anyone tell us what has become of the old-time dignity and usefulness of the public debate of the University College Literary and Scientific Society? The time was when in "Prof's Lecture Room" our public debates were characterized by decorum and decency, when essayist and reader and debator were listened to with respectful attention, and when the time of the not too sombre laws of propriety that characterized the literary feast, "ab ovo usque ad malum" were relieved by flashes of the wit that crackled and sizzled from the benches, where the "men" of the various years sat. I speak of two decades and more ago. The "men" on the benches then gave the audience and it was no more honor then to be elected to a public debate and make the best attempt one could to practically expound the society's motto, "Omnia Regia Verum Oratio."

But now it is a different thing. Our audience then were 200 or so; now they are quadrupled; the "men" are disappeared, by name at least, and the "boys" have hung their banner on the outer wall. The vocabulary certainly has changed, but the hope the virile spirit has not fled like the basest fabric of a vision.

Last Friday I witnessed one of the modern debates in the large hall of the School of Practical Science, and by the way, it was wonderful—Heretofore referred to as the "Variety" boys, and the "Public Debate" it was a splendid thing. The speaker, Mr. Irwin, the president elect, read a most able address, but the back benches punctuated it, and spoiled it in a way peculiarly their own. The reader, Mr. Grasett, I think it was, but whom I do not know personally, read with far more than ordinary ability to do justice to a brilliant tale, while the "boys" sat and eagerly watched for every opportunity to put in a remark and explanation and waved the accusation, while the reader wore the contorted smile of a man who is being run down by a rhetorical figure of "anti-climax."

But when the speeches commenced then the Olympic divinity, where was yet the subject, "Should the action of Government be confined to the life and property of the citizen?" was ably argued so far as one could judge, but the bawdiest, or "boyishness," of the back benches took the matter under their entire control and the speakers on the platform merely said something when the speaker in the rear permitted it. It certainly was remarkable how the men stood by their seats and did not move, but simply sat down. If any modern Demosthenes wishes to emulate the Greek pattern who, in order to accuse himself to the roar of the popular assembly around the Bema, went to the ocean and spoke to the thundering surge that lashed the sounding shore, then let him go and speak to an audience at a public meeting of the University Literary and Scientific Society and he will get most excellent practice. But the most wonderful thing was that, although there were 200 or more who were exerting all their intellects to say something fancy, there was not a single thing said, not one flash of humor; nothing but the veriest chaff. One could hear better things every day among the Arabians of the alleys. If there was any wit it was so light and airy and buoyant and went so high that the audience could not see it.

Surely all this is from the end and purpose of a public debate, where old graduates and friends of the college, and students with their lady friends go, and like knights of the modern Round Table congress?

"In the gardens and the halls"

"Of Camelot as in the days that were."

The men in our days were boyish, but that is not boyish, and therefore not different now, for intelligence and ability, and culture are as great now, or greater, than they were. Why should a public debate be couched with a fusillade of a sort of mental (I will not say intellectual) horsemanship? "Haps 'orse" is not the word. I do think one of the fine of the immortal William where a fair day found a mortal with the words, "And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy." Let not the flapping of the wings of the soul that the young ladies present played Titania to the bottoms of the back benches. But perhaps we older graduates do not see things clearly; we are inclined to say "Futurism" from ill-informed folly, or "Knots" from the modern folly, or "Xmas" where the moderns are yesterday, or "Queen's," and why with us now, who enjoy the proud reputation of being the very crest of our great educational system? It was not so "in the consulship of Plinius."

A GRAD. OF '66.

Snow Cleaning. The interest you take in public matters on behalf of an over-taxed community, leads me to direct attention to the miserable regulations partially enforced for snow-cleaning in Toronto.

I claim that citizens have no right to be compelled to clean snow from public thoroughfares, and if we had less jobs to manage municipal affairs it would be an improvement that must have a beneficial result. It is to be hoped that the electors will unite with the "Knapseyes" and insist on our great educational system.

What a contrast with the grand carriages hired at the people's expense, and used by the men from the City Hall to witness the foolish ceremony of laying the corner stone of our new civic hall! Not only this, but the lavish expenditure of public funds on deputations east, west, north and south—more money thus thrown away than would pay for cleaning all the snow from the sidewalks.

In Ottawa city, with its population of one-fifth that of Toronto, where the depth of snow is probably ten times that of this city, the sidewalks are properly cleaned at a charge of from \$1 to \$1.50 per 100 feet, lineal measure, under contract.

I claim that in Toronto it should not cost more than one-quarter of a cent per foot frontage.

The work is performed in Ottawa by two men to each one-hundred feet, and usually by 7 o'clock a.m. the sidewalks are all cleared.

Would you kindly give this subject special consideration.

(For away from the sidewalks are covered with from four to six inches of cake snow which makes excellent walking with rubbers or spiked shoes. In the steadily cold climate of Ottawa this state of the sidewalks is not found inconvenient, but towards the spring when thaws followed by cold weather occurs, people have to abandon the walks and take to the middle of the road. In Toronto, where thawing and freezing alternate throughout the whole winter, and where a resort to the road would be dangerous, we cannot hope to clear the sidewalks as cheaply as in the capital. Our walks would be half the time as good as those of Ottawa are at the end of winter and would be intolerable. EN. WORLD.)

It Was Not a Moose. Editor World: In your issue of Nov. 21 you make a statement which does me a very great injustice, which I think, when your attention is drawn to it, you will not hesitate to correct. Under the heading "Unworthy Game Warden," you say as follows: "When we are on the subject we may say that we see by The Plebeian Advance that Alfred Wright of New York, after a week's hunt in the Nipissing District, sent a fine deer, with a superb pair of antlers, to a friend in Plebeian. It was presumably a moose and was admittedly shot by the warden. What The Plebeian Advance did say was as follows: 'A nice present. Mrs. W. Wright received a handsome present, a fine deer, with a superb pair of antlers. The animal was shot up in Nipissing by Mr. Alfred Wright of New York and expressed to his wife.'"

Wright naturally feels proud of her present and will feel the head and antlers mounted. There is nothing whatever in that item of The Plebeian Advance to give the writer of your article reason for the statement or the presumption that it was a moose. The deer if it was an ordinary red deer, although quite large and with

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a fine head of horns. Furthermore, it was not sent to a friend but, as The Advance correctly states, to a sister. I have many friends and relatives in Ontario, which is my native home, and I do not think that you would knowingly, by those insinuations, want to place me before these friends and relatives as a violator of the Ontario law. Your paper was sent to me by a Toronto party, started in blue pencil and written: 'I will look for your name in the Police Court records. Hence I think that I am justified in asking you to make the necessary correction and send me a copy of the paper in which you publish it.'

In reference to the balance of your article I would say that I think the gentleman who has written you in reference to moose-hunting got the Ontario law wrong, a little more zealous than the facts warrant. In our party of four we were in Ontario four weeks and weeks of which we were in the woods. We got seven deer and spent about \$500, and if the money that American hunters spend in Canada was put against the deer killed I feel quite safe in saying that it would pay \$50 for each deer and then they are not allowed to take their deer home with them, not even a quarter of a mile from their own hunting grounds, and there are many people in the backwoods who can testify to the fact that American hunters are not only very zealous and open-handedly for all the pleasures they get in hunting deer in Ontario.

L. A. WRIGHT,
P. O. Box 306, New York City,
New York, Nov. 28.

Beware of collectors. Editor World: I am a 44-year-old well-dressed young man with dark hair, about 23 years of age, called on me with a subscription list for some football club which he was endeavoring, he said, to organize. I was in an upstairs room.

I have reason to think the funds so collected are not in safe hands.

As he left my sitting room he passed a hat and stick rack in the hall. From this he chose a valuable silver-mounted cane, and was walking off with it when a young lady of the household, who had heard the rattle of the cane, followed him. She then called after him. He then bolted, throwing the stick down on the landing of the next flight of stairs.

To tell me of her adventure it was too late to overtake him.

Three or four times lately I have been asked to subscribe to cricket and football clubs by young men unknown to me, but armed with a goodly subscription list. I do not think this a proper method of obtaining funds and would advise a refusal. Probably I ought to ascertain this man's name, run him down, and see if he is a respectable person. I am not a safe treasurer for a football club. He will be identified no doubt by many of the letters of the club who are in the football line. I enclose my card. SPORTSMAN.

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These goods are all our own manufacture and you can depend on them.

The person guessing the exact or nearest to the time it will take for this candle to burn out will receive as a gift the Handsome Prize Pony "Princess Louise," Cart, Harness, Rugs, etc., value \$350. This pony is pronounced by experts to be the finest ever imported. To the second nearest guesser we will give the Elegant Gendron No. 4 Bicycle, made by the Gendron Manufacturing Co. of Toronto (salesrooms 183 Yonge-st.). This wheel is said to be the best on the road to-day, value \$110. To the third nearest guesser we will give a Beautiful Solid Gold Watch, full-jeweled, American Movement, Engraved Case, purchased from the well-known Jewelers of Toronto (Davis Bros., 130 Yonge-street), value \$60.

The above beautiful presents we propose to give away on the following conditions and are open to all purchasers of goods to the value of \$2.50 or over. For instance, if you buy one of our celebrated \$10 Overcoats you are entitled to 4 Coupons; one of our \$5 Boys' Overcoats, 2 Coupons, or if you buy one of our \$2.50 Boys' Suits, 1 Coupon.

Remember, every purchaser of \$2.50 is given a blank on which to make their calculations. No numbers received except on said blanks.

The original length of the Candle was 6 ft. 4 in. and about 70 lbs. in weight. First lighted by Mayor Clarke 3.55 Saturday, Nov. 28, '91.

SEE THE CANDLE IN OUR WINDOW.

Having an Enormous Stock of Persian Lamb and South Sea Seal Caps on hand they will be cleared out at

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Umbrellas—some choice goods.
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Two Cases New Initial Silk Handkerchiefs.
One Case Fancy Brocade Handkerchiefs.
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Novelties in Fringes.
Ladies' Colored Borders.
Handkerchiefs—Ladies' White Embroidered Handkerchiefs.

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