

ARGUING vs. WRANGLING.

Unskilfulness in boxing, cricket, and other sports shows itself in blind and futile eruptions of nervous energy. The adept is always self-possessed, watchful and effective. In debate the same contrast may be observed. The novice cannot keep still; he must be continually lunging out at his opponent or the judge. If his adversary lays down a proposition of law, it must be instantly denounced; if he contends that the evidence bears a certain complexion, he must be immediately contradicted; if the judge asks a question, it is assumed that only one person is capable of answering it; and after a ruling is given, or a judgment pronounced, it requires several minutes to bring the wrangler to a knowledge of the fact that he is beaten. Let a debate between such men as Edward Blake and Dalton McCarthy be compared with the every day babel and wrangle of our chambers, and our remarks will be amply justified. The object of argument is to convince the judge, not your opponent. It should be borne in mind that the judge does not require constant aid in order that he may retain his common sense, and that for an appeal to his reason argument is more effective than noise.

Interruption is sometimes not only justifiable but imperative. If, in reply, an advocate intentionally, or otherwise, misquote evidence, he should, with an apology for the interruption, be at the moment put right; and, indeed, an interruption at any stage may be justified upon this ground. We have always thought, however, that when the rules of debate permit a reply, it is the very worst policy to point out errors during your opponent's address. Let him proceed, let him build up his argument upon a misconception of the evidence or the law, let him assume premise after premise and cover himself with glory. Your task is being made easy. When your turn comes you have no ingenious argument to meet, you are hampered with no fine distinctions; you point out that there is no foundation for the grand superstructure, and your case is won. Interrupt your