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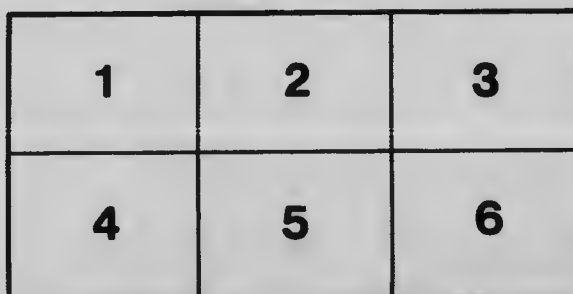
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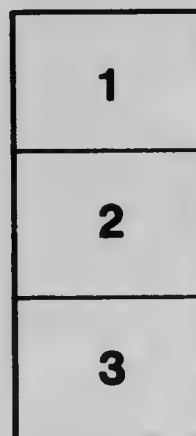
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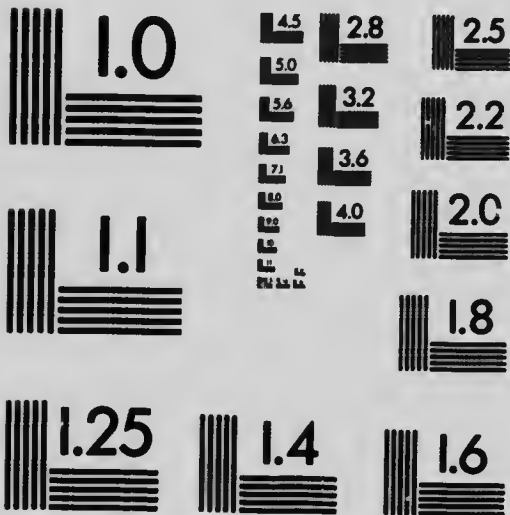
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# Principles and Practice of Debating

*Prepared for the Department of  
Extension by E. K. Broadus, Ph.D.  
Professor of English Literature  
in the University of Alberta.*



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1913  
EDMONTON, ALTA.

# PRINCIPLES *and* PRACTICE OF DEBATING

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## I

## INTRODUCTION

To be a good debater—that is, to be able to speak convincingly on controversial subjects—is to possess one of the most desirable of qualities. Nearly every act of public service, whether in a rural or village community, in a city, in the province, or in the country at large, is effected through the pressure of organized public opinion. To aid in moulding public opinion is at once a source of gratification and a duty. Effective argument, whether in private conversation or public discussion, is not, however, merely a matter of conviction; it is also, and largely, a matter of skill in massing, presenting and interpreting facts; and this skill is as much the result of practice and training as the achievement of the athlete is the result of exercise in the gymnasium and on the field. To gain this skill, and through it to take a worthy part in public service, no better means can be devised than the organization of, and participation in, a Debating Society.



## II.

## ORGANIZATION OF A DEBATING SOCIETY.

The nucleus of such an organization can be found in any literary society already organized, or in any church society not primarily devotional in character. If such a nucleus is not already available, the organization of a Debating Society can be readily effected, the only condition of membership being a formal promise or implicit understanding on the part of every member to hold himself in readiness to take part in the debate when called upon. The only officers necessary are a president, vice-president and secretary, and, if any expenses are to be incurred (such for example as the hiring of a hall for a public debate) a treasurer. From the outset the members of the society should resolve themselves into an informal current-topics club, clipping from the newspapers all references to current topics, political, social, economic, literary, moral or religious, which impress them as debatable. These clippings, supplemented by such local subjects as suggest themselves, may be handed to the Secretary, and by him pasted in a 'topics-book', from which selections for general debate can be made as occasion demands. No member ought, however, to be content with merely securing the clipping and handing it over to the secretary. The discovery that any topic is a matter of public concern furnishes the best of reasons for knowing more about it. The member who has made the clipping should try to find out for himself why the given topic is exciting public interest, where and why public opinion is divided, what the advocates of either side have

to say about it, and where the truth lies. Whether the given topic is subsequently chosen for general debate or not, the member will have enriched his own mind with a well digested opinion about it, and, if it is chosen, will be in a position either to listen intelligently or take an active part.

Out of the topics thus put into the hands of the secretary, or in some way communicated to the society at large, a choice will then be made of a subject for formal debate.

### III.

#### SUBJECT FOR DEBATE

The choice of subjects for formal debate and the proper formulation of these into debatable propositions is by no means a random matter. In order that the debate may be profitable, and the result in any way conclusive, certain precautions have to be taken, and certain well-recognized rules observed. A good subject for debate must be:

(a) *Vital*. The proposition that the best interests of the drama would be fostered by establishing a system of government-endowed theatres, is a perfectly debatable question, but it is much less vital to a small town than the proposition that the municipality should build a town hall. The proposition that the United States is justified in imposing the toll for its own ships in the Panama Canal is a perfectly debatable question, but it will become a vital one only when the debater perceives his own indirect economic interest in the matter. It may very well be that in a given community, the proposition that a local railroad is justified in charging a certain scale of freight rates is a more vital and therefore a more

debatable question. The point is that the greatest interest will be excited, and the best results obtained, by selecting a subject with which the debater is, and the audience can be brought to be, in practical sympathy.

This does not necessarily preclude historical and literary subjects, though it suggests that for practical purposes these subjects may be of secondary importance. The proposition that Bacon wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare has been hotly debated for half a century: but it is a vital subject only where the audience is sufficiently well acquainted with Shakespeare to be interested in the arguments and concerned with the solution. In a word, the subject must be not only one about which the debaters may exercise their wits, but also one concerning which the debater can hope to carry conviction to the minds of an audience who are willing to concede that they need convincing. Such subjects, it may be well to repeat, are, first, those which affect the economic well-being of the audience locally, through community interest, or generally, through the sense of co-partnership in the welfare of the state at large; or second, those about which the audience, through reading and study, may have acquired an intellectual concern.

(b) *Impersonal*. It has already been observed that the best subjects are those in which the debaters and the audience feel some practical concern. It is well, however, to exclude such subjects as are likely to arouse personal feeling. Since the lion and the lamb have not yet acquired the habit of lying down together, it is best to avoid controversial questions of religion, or those which are indirectly liable to emphasize denominational differences. It is equally true that where the audience

is divided by any sort of factional bitterness, to launch public debate upon the troubled sea is only to invite disaster.

(c) *Definite.* The favorite pitfall of the inexperienced debater is the subject or proposition the terms of which are not clearly understood. It is a common but none the less regrettable experience to see the allotted time of the formal debate in great part wasted in interpretations and re-interpretations of terms, and squabbling over the meaning of words. One debater will invoke a dictionary-definition in his own behalf and his opponent will produce a definition from another dictionary which refutes, or appears to refute, the first.

As a matter of fact, the dictionary—in spite of the general opinion to the contrary—is not always a trustworthy source of information for the debater. It is the business of the compiler of a dictionary to give, not one meaning for a word, but all the variants to which usage has given rise. Even obsolete and obsolescent meanings are included; and though these are usually indicated by some symbol or abbreviation as not now in good use, the obscurity of the indication frequently causes it to be overlooked by the inexperienced, or permits it to be disregarded by the unscrupulous. Moreover, our modern vocabulary is so fluid; new words to express new conditions are so constantly springing into being that the lexicon which the debater finds upon his shelves is as likely to be a mausoleum as a dictionary.

In this state of confusion and uncertainty there is only one course open to the debater. When a subject or proposition is proposed for formal debate, the opposing sides must hold a preliminary conference and agree upon the interpretation of the terms or wording of the proposition.

When such agreement cannot be reached, the presumption is established that the proposition as worded is not properly debatable and that the wording should be changed. For example, in a debate which occurred not long ago between two universities the proposition was worded: "Resolved, that Canada should build, operate, and maintain a Canadian national navy. In the final argument, the word *national* was differently interpreted. By one side, it was considered as the converse of *colonial*, that is, the navy was to exist primarily in the interests of the Empire at large. By the other, the word was interpreted as virtually synonymous with Canadian, and the navy was considered primarily in the light of its importance to the *nation* of Canada. By this diversity of interpretation, the issue was clouded and the debate, to a certain extent, rendered abortive. Had the debaters previously discussed the meaning of every word of the proposition, the equivocal term could have been either eliminated, or for the purpose of that debate, defined. Incidentally, it should be noted that such dictionary definitions of *national* as "pertaining to a nation or organized body politic", and the like, were of absolutely no service in settling the difficulty.

(d) *Containing a single specific issue.* It is clear from what has been said that a subject for debate must be definite and unequivocal; but a proposition may have these qualities and yet remain unsuitable for debate. To be actually debatable, the proposition must contain one and only one issue; that is, the proposition must make one definite specific assertion, which is directly susceptible of proof or refutation. The importance of this point cannot be over-emphasized; for ignorance of it or indifference to it has been responsible for much stupid and fruitless argument masquerading under the name of debate.

In the definition of the issue, just given, there are two points to be observed. The first of these is that the assertion must be really susceptible of *proof*. In other words, it must not be of such a nature as to permit mere piling up of illustrations for or against. Of such a nature are many of the good old propositions on which school societies have whetted their brains from time immemorial. Resolved, that drunkenness has been responsible for more crimes than poverty; that Shakespeare was a greater poet than Milton; that the standard of honor is higher among men than among women;—these and many like unto them are veritable classics of misdirected debate. It is obvious that the citation on the one side of crimes committed in intoxication could be endlessly balanced with crimes committed under the stress of privation; that the quotation of favorite passages from Shakespeare could be endlessly balanced with the quotation of favorite passages from Milton, and that the enumeration of honorable deeds done by men could be endlessly balanced with the enumeration of honorable deeds done by women; and that after all, the debaters would be precisely where they started except for the rather dubious benefit of having paraded a little recently acquired learning. If, on the other hand, these same propositions were modified to read that: the town of Blank is justified in adopting local option, or that the army should prohibit the canteen; that Bacon wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare; or that women are entitled to suffrage;—these propositions become at once debatable. In other words, these propositions have now acquired a succinct *issue*, concerning which arguments can be adduced and proof or refutation achieved.

With the issue thus developed, care must also be taken, as has already been suggested, that other issues

be excluded. This does not necessarily mean that the proposition be reduced to a single statement. In the debate already cited, the proposition that Canada should "build, operate and maintain a navy", while it describes three different processes, contains nevertheless only a single issue; for the wording of the proposition directs the attention of the debater, not to the process, but to the result. If, on the other hand, the proposition had been that Canada should build, operate and maintain a navy, and devote it when necessary to the cause of imperial defense; a double burden of proof would have been placed upon the affirmative; one of these issues might have been proved by the affirmative and the other refuted by the negative; and the judges would not have been able to render a just decision.

Without further multiplication of examples, we may now assume that a subject has been chosen for the debate, of such a nature that the audience will take a lively interest in the argument; phrased in such a way that the debaters may agree as to the meaning of the terms; and so restricted that it may contain a single, debatable issue. With the subject in hand the debaters will now proceed to the direct preparation for the debate.

#### IV.

### PREPARATION FOR DEBATE

In several of the larger centres of the Province have been established public libraries which contain books of general information useful to the debater. In the smaller centres, however, and in village communities, the Debating Society will find itself thrown largely on its own resources. In such cases every member of the

society should supply to the Secretary a list of the reference books upon his own shelves which he is willing to put at the service of the society at large; and every member should accustom himself to individual research. Information acquired through one's own exertions and at the price of patient labor is doubly valuable; but the investigator must rid himself at the outset of the common illusion that whatever is found in a book must be true. In any current question, the date of the book consulted is of material importance; and especially in political topics, ideas which have found their way into book form are almost as likely to be politically biased as those published in newspapers or magazines. Moreover, the debater who contents himself with the study of only those books, pamphlets or journals which take his side of the question leaves himself unversed in his opponents' arguments and therefore unprepared to meet intelligent opposition. The corrective for this difficulty lies in consulting a sufficient variety of authorities and striking a balance of judgment. With the resources of a local Debating Society this is frequently impossible. In order to meet this difficulty, the University proposes to supply to the local society, upon request, materials for debate not only upon the topics which have already been announced, but also, as far as possible, upon any other topics which the society may desire to debate.

## V.

### THE USE OF THE MATERIALS

With the evidence and arguments on both sides of the question in hand, the debater will set to work upon his own argument for the debate. In doing so, he should observe certain necessary precautions. The



first, and in some respects the most important of these, is the proper acknowledgement of indebtedness to his authorities. There is no species of composition in which the temptation to plagiarize is as strong as in debating. It is so easy for young debaters to "lard their lean books with the fat of others' works;" the printed arguments seem so much better than one's own, and the risk of detection in platform oratory is so much less than in the written word, that the young debater drifts unconsciously into a habit of unacknowledged borrowing, which is, to speak plainly, nothing less than theft. If it is true that thought is his who says it best, it is equally true that a thought once formulated becomes, at least in that form and phrasing, the property of him who formulates it. On the other hand, a thought once digested, assimilated, understood, becomes the property of its immediate possessor, and will find spontaneous expression in his own words.

In order to avoid the temptation to plagiarize, the debater should, as the first step in his preparation, read over the available material on both sides of the question, making as he goes only such notes as will serve to remind him of the point, and, if necessary, re-direct him to the source. He should then develop his own argument as fully as possible without reference to his authorities. Only when his own first draft is completed should he have recourse to what he has read, and then only for the quotation, with explicit acknowledgement, of such passages as are needed to reinforce his own argument.

In this connection, it is well to remember, first, that a quotation, to be really effective, should always be prefaced by a word of explanation as to the importance or trustworthiness of the authority cited;

and, second, that to overburden the argument with quotation breaks the thread of the thought and is also likely to impress the judge with the idea that the debater is carting lumber instead of thinking for himself.

With his general reading accomplished and with these precautions in mind, the debater is now ready to prepare his argument. If the argument is on a question of fact, as for example, that Henry VIII founded the Church of England, the development of the debater's "case" will consist principally of a sifting and weighing of evidence; but if, as is generally the case, the proposition involves, not a question of fact, but a question of policy, the debater on the affirmative side will endeavor to prove that the policy proposed is (a) practicable—that is, it can actually be carried out under the existing conditions; (b) timely—that is, more desirable at present than at some future time to which his opponent may argue that it should be deferred; and (c) expedient—that is, really desirable and productive of tangibly beneficial results. In each of these courses of reasoning, the debater will seek to anticipate his opponents' objections by stating them and meeting them in advance.

If, on the other hand, the debater assumes the negative side of the proposition, the train of reasoning will generally tend to show that the course proposed by the affirmative has exactly the converse of the qualities already set forth; that is, that the proposition is (a) impracticable; or if practicable, nevertheless (b) inopportune; and (c) prejudicial to the interests of the community or the public at large. If (a) can be successfully established, it is manifest that the negative can win its case without concerning itself with (b) or (c). If (a) and (c) are difficult or impossible to es-

establish, the negative can frequently succeed by concentrating itself on (b). Finally, if the nature of the proposition is such that all of these fundamental objections are difficult or even impossible to establish, the negative may still win its case by showing that the affirmative side has not sustained what is called the "burden of proof,"—that is, that it has not demonstrated that a change of policy will show results manifestly better than those prevailing under present conditions.\*

In carrying out these lines of argument the first and most important step is the preparation of the *brief*.

## VI.

### THE BRIEF

A brief is a co-ordination of the points of an argument, so arranged that it leads naturally and logically to the conclusion sought. It must not be a collection of notes, but an orderly sequence of ideas, each supported by short references to the evidence. The completed brief must be itself a proof or refutation of the issue, the final argument or debate being in all cases a mere expansion of the brief.

The beginner may be impatient of such formalities, and may even be tempted to trust to the inspiration of the final moment for the ordering of his thoughts; but it may safely be said that no convincing argument, even an extemporaneous one in informal discussion, ever came into being without the existence of a brief,

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\*It should be evident from the above that the duty of the negative is solely to refute. Nothing is gained on the part of the negative by setting up and attempting to establish a "second affirmative", that is a counter-proposition supposedly better than the one originally advanced. To do this is to go outside the limits of the debate and should be enough, under discriminating judges, to ensure the defeat of the negative side.

whether merely carefully thought out in the mind of the speaker, or laboriously written out in preparation for a formal debate. An inexperienced debater will be the more readily convinced of the importance of the brief, if he will read attentively any piece of well-wrought argument to which he may have access, from the famous speeches of Burke down to a political argument in a current magazine; and will undertake to reduce the argument to its essential structure. The result of this analysis will be an outline answering in all respects to the definition of a brief at the beginning of this section, and will resolve itself into three parts: (a) the Introduction, which will state concisely the nature and importance of the question; the aspects of the question which can be readily granted by both sides or for the purposes of the debate disregarded; and the actual issue which it is the purpose of the debate to meet; (b) the Brief Proper, which will present, concisely stated, the leading ideas of the proof, arranged in climactic order, or, in other words, developing logically step by step from the least important to the most important; these, in turn, supported by sub-heads presenting the evidence by which the main ideas are supported; and finally (c) the Conclusion, which will sum up the arguments and show their collective bearing upon the main issue.

When the debater has found by experiment that every well ordered argument contains these structural parts, and is convinced that these parts are not an accident but a necessary preliminary, he will construct his own argument accordingly.

One of the most effective methods of arranging material and reducing it to the form of a brief is by the use of slips or cards. Upon each card should be written

one of the main points of the argument, stated as concisely as possible. Disregarding for the moment the ultimate position of this main idea in the final co-ordination, the debater should test its value by noting briefly upon the same card the evidence for and against. After each main idea has been thus tested, and its relative importance tentatively indicated, these cards should be co-ordinated—that is, the debater should, by arranging them in various sequences, and “trying out” his argument in various ways, make up his mind as to the order in which the thought can be most effectively developed, proceeding from the least important to the most important. The cards should then be numbered, and the brief notes of the evidence for each point should be expanded, on separate cards, each one being indicated for convenience of classification by a letter of the alphabet; for example, the first general point of the argument will be indicated by the figure 1, and the “evidence cards” for this main point or idea will be classified as 1a, 1b, etc. Here again, the debater will probably find it necessary to make various shifts in the order of his sub-heads, to make the argument for the main point more effective. On these sub-head or evidence cards, in turn, he will copy the quotations from authorities which he will wish to cite in support of his contentions.

Merely as an illustration of method, the following brief has been made from an article entitled “Woman Suffrage,” in *The National Review* (London), February, 1912, with such minor changes as are necessary to adapt it to the form of a debate. This article has been chosen first because it is an argument on a subject of current interest, and second because the reader can readily secure a copy of the magazine and verify for himself

the process of brief-making. The brief adheres to the order of points in the article, but that order is by no means above criticism. The reader will find it profitable to experiment with the material and see if a re-arrangement would make the argument more effective. It may be added that the fact that this is an argument on the negative side of this question has not been in any way responsible for the choice of this article.

Resolved: That the Parliamentary franchise should be granted to women.

### Introduction.

I. Women are conducting a general campaign to obtain enfranchisement.

(a) Brief history of the movement.

II. The Issue: Shall women be placed on a political equality with men?

### The Brief.

I. The enfranchisement of women will result in the adoption of adult suffrage.

A. It is argued that women who pay taxes should have votes; but—

(a) Upon the granting of the franchise to the minority of well-to-do women, all women will demand the suffrage.

(b) The inevitable consequence will be general adult suffrage.

II. The enfranchisement of women will result in the substitution of women for men as the controlling power in the state.

(a) If all adults are enfranchised, the number of

parliamentary electors will be raised approximately from 7,000,000 to 23,000,000, of whom women will form a majority of at least 1,000,000 voters.

(b) The right to vote carries with it the right to occupy any office in the state.

(<sup>1</sup>) Gladstone (April 11, 1892): "The woman's vote carries with it, whether by the same bill or by a consequential bill, the woman's seat in Parliament. . . . Capacity to sit in the House of Commons now legally and practically draws in its train capacity to fill every office in the state."

(c) The existence of an overwhelming majority of woman voters will ultimately place the government of the Empire in the hands of women.

III. The franchise once given can never be taken away.

(a) The experience of history proves that though the franchise has often been extended it has never been withdrawn.

IV. It is argued that women have an "innate right" to enfranchisement; but—

(a) If women have an "innate right" to enfranchisement, then every man and woman as such, without any other qualification, is entitled to the franchise. This would include the illiterate and even convicts and imbeciles.

(b) Historically, proved efficiency, and not

"innate right," has always been in this country the test for parliamentary enfranchisement.

V. It is argued that taxation and representation go together; but—

(a) The payment of rates or taxes has never in this country entitled men to enfranchisement.

(1) The statute 8 Henry VI, c. 7, which is the foundation of the present parliamentary franchise, does not mention payment of rates or taxes.

(b) The owner of property of the statutory value is entitled to the franchise whether he pays rates or taxes, or not.

(c) Many lodgers who pay taxes have no vote.

(d) Companies (e.g., The L. & N.W. Railway Co. pay taxes but are not qualified to vote).

(e) Minors in many cases pay taxes and rates, but these are not qualified to vote.

VI. It is argued that woman suffrage would increase women's wages.

(a) It is said that women are fettered by restrictive legislation; e.g., The Factory Acts; but

(1) Restrictive legislation is sound and necessary because, for physical reasons, the labor of women cannot usually be so efficient or regular as that of men.

(b) The effect of increasing the number of



persons competing for industrial employment would be to lower, not to increase, wages.

(1) Wages are regulated, not by parliament, but by laws of supply and demand.

(c) It is already within the power of women to influence wages through the right of industrial combination.

VII. It is argued that woman's position under the law would be less unjust than it now is.

(A) As a wife; but—

(1) The Married Women's Property Acts, 1870-1893, make the married woman the mistress of her own property while

(2) She retains the legal rights and protection (for example, immunity from damages, the enforcement of the payment of debts contracted by her, etc.), incident to her status as a married woman.

(B) As a mother; but, whereas—

(1) Formerly the father had practically unlimited control over the child, the Custody of Infants Act, 1886, gives to the courts the right whenever necessary to transfer the custody of the child from the father to the mother.

VIII. It is argued that government should be by consent of the people governed.

- ( ) If all persons who are compelled to obey the law have the right to make the law, it follows that all persons, good and bad, sane and insane, have the right to be parliamentary electors.

IX. The effect of woman suffrage would be bad:

A. Upon women.

- (a) Political activity would diminish her efficiency as wife and mother.
- (b) Political activity would weaken, if not corrupt, her moral influence.
- (c) Political activity would impose conditions upon woman with which she is physically unable to cope.

B. Upon the nation.

- (a) The inclination of woman toward emotionalism and sentiment would jeopardize the stability of the electorate.
- (b) It may be granted that men are not infrequently swayed by emotionalism and sentiment; but it would not be to the interests of the nation to multiply the number of emotional and unstable voters.
- (c) National defense depends upon military force. One of the "ultimate obligations of citizenship" is national defense. It is obvious that in the interests of national security only those persons should make the laws who can enforce laws.
- (d) A wide canvas has shown that women as a whole are not in favor of parlia-

mentary responsibilities being thrust upon them. To impose the suffrage under these conditions would be prejudicial to the best interests of the nation at large.

## CONCLUSION

The arguments in favor of woman suffrage resolve themselves, first, into a plea that women have an innate right to vote: It has been shown that for neither man nor woman does an innate right to vote exist; second, that taxation should involve representation: it has been shown that the present parliamentary franchise does not rest upon this principle; third, that woman suffrage would increase women's wages; it has been shown that enfranchisement would be more likely to lower wages than to raise them; fourth, that the legal status of women would be improved: it has been shown that the status of women is already amply provided for by the law; fifth, that government should be by the consent of the governed: it has been shown that this principle does not actually obtain.

But it is not merely true that the arguments advanced by the advocates of woman suffrage are fallacious. It has been shown that enfranchisement would not only be prejudicial to the best interests of woman herself, but would also result in positive detriment to the nation at large. Moreover, it should be remembered that this experiment is not only untried and hazardous, but also, in that it is desired by only a small minority of women, it is actually unnecessary. It may therefore reasonably be concluded that the parliamentary franchise should not be granted to women.

## VII.

## THE FORMAL DEBATE

With the completed brief before him, the debater is now ready to expand his outline into the full argument. For the inexperienced debater especially, it is very important and usually absolutely necessary that he should write out his argument, down to the last comma, so to speak, before he undertakes to deliver it from the platform. This will serve a double purpose. In the first place, with the limited time (usually not more than 15 minutes) which will be allotted to him in the final debate, he must be sure that what he has to say can be said before the chairman's gavel halts his argument. He cannot trust to instinct or to the inspiration of the moment to condense his argument as the expiration of the time draws near. Before the final evening of the debate arrives, he should have read his complete argument aloud at the slow rate of delivery necessary for effective public speaking, and should have satisfied himself—if necessary by several such experiments—that it can be finished within his allotted time. It is much more effective to end well within the time, and really get through, than to have such a wealth of argument that the debater is unable to finish it. A debate is not a piece of intellectual parade; it is an effort to convince.

In the second place, the careful writing out of his argument will give him a facility and sureness of speech invaluable in the final debate. Nothing can be more painful to an audience than the spectacle of an inexperienced debater struggling along with a series of

"ers" and "ahs," trying to construct connected phrases and sentences. Prompt and assured speech is one of the most fundamental requisites of good debate. To gain this, the debater should read over his final manuscript, not once but many times; each time, aloud; and each time, with such clearness of enunciation, with such wholesome respect for his final g's and t's, that every word and every sounded letter of every word will be distinctly audible to every person in a crowded hall.

But the debater must distinguish carefully between these many readings, and a conscious memorizing of the sentences. There danger lies; for once let his memory trick him into forgetfulness of a single phrase in a speech memorized verbatim, and the whole thing will fall to pieces like a house of cards. Rather let him read his manuscript over until the sequence of the argument, the transitions of thought, and the general cast of the sentences, become familiar, and then let him, with cheerful confidence, throw his manuscript into the wastebasket, and take with him to the debate only the brief, and the formal quotations from authorities.

Then, with assurance born of familiarity with the general tenor of his argument, and without slavish dependence upon a manuscript, he will speak as one having authority and not as one of the scribes.

## VIII.

### REBUTTAL

So much for the preparation for the formal debate. In addition to this, however, something should be said of those direct rejoinders made in the course of the

debate and known as arguments or speeches in rebuttal.

It is customary in a formal debate to allot ten or fifteen or at most twenty minutes to each of the speakers for his formal argument, and then to allow five or ten minutes to the leader or opening speaker on each side\* for another speech at the end of the debate, in which he shall make a direct rejoinder to the arguments advanced by his opponents. In addition to this final opportunity, however, the second and third speakers on either side are always strongly tempted to devote the first few minutes of their allotted time to answering the arguments which they have just heard advanced by their opponents. With a skilled debater who has had long practice in extemporaneous argument, this is frequently very effective. But with the beginner, and indeed with the great majority of amateur debaters, this is likely to do more harm than good. Instead of proceeding immediately and confidently with the speech whose tenor is clearly in his mind, he will stumble from one reply to another, not infrequently misstating his opponent's point, generally citing some fact or quotation, the relevance of which he is too confused to show clearly; confusing himself more and more by his fear of failure, and taking much more of his allotted time than he is aware of. Then without any transition, he will enter abruptly upon his set speech (if he has not by this time forgotten it altogether), only to be halted half way through by the chairman's gavel. Meanwhile, he has anticipated the points of his leader's final speech of rebuttal just enough to take the fresh-

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\* It is frequently the case that, where the affirmative must maintain a definite burden of proof, the privilege of a formal rebuttal speech is not accorded to the negative.

ness and force out of them. Instead of thus dividing his allotted time between an "off-hand" refutation and a formal argument, the debater will generally do well to confine himself to the constructive reasoning to which he has had time to give careful preparation. On the other hand, while he is awaiting his turn, he can note down such rejoinders to his opponents' arguments as occur to him, and give these to the leader for use in the final speech of rebuttal. The leader on each side should have been chosen with due regard to his ability in impromptu argument; and it will generally be found that the five or ten minutes allotted to the final speech of rebuttal will be enough for the leader, who has had opportunity to get his notes into shape during the progress of the debate, to make a sufficient rejoinder to such points advanced by the other side as have not been already foreseen and dealt with in the course of the formal debate.

## MAXIMS FOR THE DEBATER

When you advance to the front of the stage, don't look vacant and speak your piece. Pick out a heavy-jowled man on the back row and try to make his face light up.

Avoid anecdotes. If you have a good story tell it at the beginning.

Avoid the high style; leave sensationalism to the orator, and stick to common sense.

Persuasion is good, but conviction is better.

Appeal to the conscience; appeal also to the pocket-book.

Do not say "My honorable opponents" more than three times during the debate.

Avoid personalities.

Boil it down. Stevenson said that if he knew how to omit, he could make an Iliad out of a daily newspaper.

Do not sneer at your opponents;—Shylock tried it in the trial-scene.

Attend to your ideas and your gestures will attend to themselves.

Do not say, "My first point is," "My second point is," etc. Make your points. Don't talk about them.

When you have lost, shake hands with the winner—and mean it.

When you have won, shake hands with the loser—and ask his advice about something. It will restore his self-respect.

The judge of a debate, like Charity, suffereth long and is kind. Do not blame him if the decision goes against you.



## APPENDIX

**How to Judge a Debate.**

It is sometimes the case that those to whom an invitation has been extended to act as judges in a debate have had no previous experience, or may not have considered the nature of the responsibility which that duty entails. To these it is hoped that a few suggestions may be acceptable.

On any topic of current interest proposed for debate, it is probable that the judges will have already formed definite opinions. It is important to remember that the decision of the judges should not be affected in any way by their opinion on the merits of the question. For the judges, as for the audience, one side of the debate will be the unpopular side; but the decision will be rendered solely on the basis of the merits of the debate. It has been the purpose of this pamphlet at once to indicate the mode of procedure in the preparation of a debate, and to suggest the standards by which a debate may be judged. From the standpoint of the judges it may be well to summarize in the form of a series of questions.

**I.—The Individual Speaker.**

Has the debater given a clear explanation of the nature of the question?

Has the debater defined the issue?

Has the debater adhered to the actual issue, and refrained from bringing in extraneous material?

Has the debater developed his points consecutively and logically?

Has the debater supported his contentions by sound evidence?

Has the debater shown that the authorities whom he quotes are trustworthy? Have the citations actually supported his contentions and has he refrained from overburdening his argument with quotations?

In his final summary, has the debater succeeded in showing, in a concise and definite way, the collective bearing of his main arguments upon the actual issue?

Has the debater been courteous and free from boisterousness?

Has the debater spoken distinctly and audibly and at the same time without shrillness or strain?

Has the debater hesitated or floundered?

Have his sentences been reasonably well put together and his grammar reasonably good?

(Of the foregoing it should be noticed that the thought is of more importance than the manner of delivery. A debate is not primarily an elocutionary exercise; it is an effort at sound thinking.)

## II.—The Side.

Have the three debaters on either side co-operated in the planning of the debate, so that each debater's arguments have neither repeated nor overlapped, but have distinctly supplemented, those of his associates?

Has the affirmative side definitely sustained the burden of proof, or if not, has it given any adequate reason for shifting that burden to the negative?

Does the sum total of arguments on the affirmative side definitely sustain their contention?

Have these arguments been met wholly or in part by the negative?

Has the negative established the presumption that the change advocated by the affirmative, while practicable, is still not immediately necessary?

Have the speeches in rebuttal dealt with the vital points? Have these points been actually refuted or merely restated and loosely criticised?

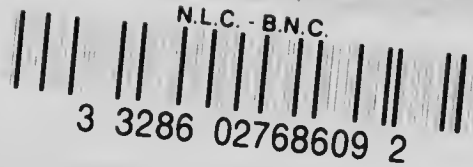
When the debate is over, two methods of coming to a decision are open to the judges. They may either retire for consultation, compare the notes which they have taken, agree upon a verdict and appoint one of their number to report their decision; or they may, without consultation, vote independently, writing the word "affirmative" or "negative" on a slip of paper, and handing it to a secretary or teller, who will transmit the result to the chairman for public announcement. The former method is generally adopted, but it is open to two grave objections: first, that the judges' discussion of the merits of the debate is likely to degenerate into argument on the merits of the question; and second, that absolute independence of judgment is less likely to obtain. The latter method is decidedly to be preferred.







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