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VARIOUS

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THE
YALE LITERARY MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXI

OCTOBER, 1855.

No. I.

EDITORS FOR THE CLASS OF '56.

G. F. BAILLY;

W. H. W. CAMPBELL,

J. M. BROWN,

H. DU BOIS,

L. C. FISCHER.

The Campaign.

THE annual society campaign has been brought to a close. In one or the other of our two Literary Societies have all of the newly entered members of our College enlisted themselves, "for four years or the war." During this campaign, our Societies, so nearly identical in all that properly distinguishes literary bodies, so nearly akin in their most peculiar features, and so intimately connected in their influence on College Improvement, have waged a war of extermination. Forgetting that the conduct of the two Societies is of vital interest as affecting the advancement, literary and oratorical, of the members, and sinking steady perseverance in the exercises into a station second to mere number of members, we observe partisans of either cause, engaged in a strife for a nominal victory, as short lived as it is factitious.

To this contest for numbers, no one could object, were it made to hold a place subordinate to the legitimate literary exercises of the Societies, nor do we find fault with it. The enthusiasm of the campaign, the ardor of excitement, the glowing patriotism of the busy electioneer, all tend to raise his ideal and lead him to form higher notions

of what a society should be, than can possibly be attained in a College organization.

But a higher standard of perfection once fixed, an effort to attain to it is but natural. We would expect to see every nerve strained by the votaries of either cause to continually elevate their respective Societies. Here we are at fault—no earnest endeavor on the part of Society-men meets that expectation which their previous ardor has aroused. No really original steps are taken in that march towards perfection, which we would look for, as the fruits of an earnest desire for improvement in the institutions. The fountain of enthusiasm is dried up before its inspiring waters flow so far down the channels as the brief course of a few weeks.

This backsliding has frequently been reproved and variously explained. By some, "secret societies" have been reviled as the cause of the decadence. The engrossing tendency of our secret Societies has, it is said, robbed the larger and more public bodies of that charm of novelty and privacy, that once was theirs. It is urged that to many minds the mere *secrecy* of the smaller societies, to which they may be attached, is an attraction of such potency as to do away with any feeling of obligation to prosecute with energy the duties of the Literary Societies.

This, it is alleged, is the sole cause of degeneracy in our Societies, and this reason has been so pertinaciously urged, as to gain at last general credence. Much odium has by this means been heaped upon Secret Organizations. The Faculty cannot but regard with a suspicious eye institutions whose very members blame them as the cause of a multitude of evils in our midst—and which are a constant subject of complaint and murmur with those whose efforts to gain admittance have proved futile. These latter disappointed ones are only too happy to defame, on grounds apparently so plausible, the very societies to which they would have delighted to join themselves as members.

Secret Societies are doubtless the formidable rival of the older and more democratic of our College associations; but we apprehend that, although they may so far surpass in interest, as to make the larger only a field wherein the strength of the different parties may be measured, this is nevertheless a reproach too sweepingly made and too carelessly substantiated. The fact that the larger societies afford an opportunity to the ambitious and political men of College to display talents for intrigue and shuffling diplomacy, is not so much to be deprecated as the crime of Secret Societies,—the active agents in these demagogue movements—as it to be regretted as a necessary evil.

Our Secret Societies form, it is true, parties in our petty politics. But if these were not the controlling elements of our College elections, we should find ourselves divided by sectional feeling into factions virulent and uncompromising.

We would not attempt to investigate at any length the various reasons for that loss of consequence that the larger Societies have sustained. These reasons we do believe are various and different with each class and almost with each individual. We do not believe the decadence attributed to one single cause. Yet there is one cause of great power, as we think, and not difficult of remedy. We allude to that apathy and carelessness after the work of a campaign, that reaction from the undue importance to which the Societies are raised in the canvass for members.

This is but a natural consequence, and yet if it could be avoided, how much more of good would accrue to members both new and old! And it is to be conquered by a sense of duty to *self*, a resolve not to let pass unheeded those advantages that are at best but too transitory. One strong effort will break through this deplorable indifference on our part, and will restore to the "Brothers" and to "Linonia" those crowded meetings and eloquently contested debates that were theirs in former years.

Let us not celebrate a victory or mourn a defeat of a few in numbers, by idly boasting as if that were proper use of triumph, or by regretting as though that could help our cause; but let us one and all, Linonians and Brothers in Unity, contend in our *improvement* for that palm which mere excess of numbers can never deserve, and let us welcome our younger brethren to an energetic and improving year of labor in our literary gatherings.

Mr. McCreed's Church.

"Yes, we must have a church!" So said Mr. McCreed, the benevolent man, as he stood gazing upon his numerous vacant house-lots at the edge of the city.

Mr. McCreed was a public benefactor. He engaged in many public undertakings. He gave a great deal of money to aid prominent moral enterprises. The public claimed him as its own property and, with its

usual volubility, clamored forth its praises, "Mr. McCreed, the guardian of public morals, the director of public enterprise, and the model of all good citizens." It appeared he had no faults. His character was as spotless as his white neckerchief. So you would judge by the epithets applied by the public. He was not a Christian. Indeed, private scandal was current, relating to bad-temper and profanity indulged in by the good man; relating to mean and oppressive dealings with his customers and tenants, but fie upon private scandal! Mr. McCreed does not care for private scandal, not he. When any outrageous report comes to his ears, he smoothes his neckcloth and murmurs softly to himself, something like lamb. Probably he is encouraging himself to indulge a lamb-like temper. But what are reports? Every man, however worthy, has his enemies, and so has Mr. McCreed.

"Yes, we must have a church! Here is a fine locality for it. There are but few buildings and scattered, for people dislike to live here, so far from a house of worship. It will effect a great change in the character of the inhabitants. Now they are poor and immoral, but a handsome church will attract a better class. Yes, yes!" and Mr. McCreed gave another glance at the locality, tapped his forehead, and went to visit an architect.

Piles of brick, and stone, and wood; heavy teams continually dragging loads of building materials; men digging, and hammering, and shouting, and running about; curious street committee inspecting the whole operation; inquiries by anxious editors with unusually rotund pocket-books; congratulatory notices in the papers, and the benevolent work is begun. Yes, and Mr. McCreed contemplates it with an unruffled serenity as it progresses day by day. Yet, to a careful observer, there is a joy in his eye, and a lightness in his step, "which was not so before." He is observed to rub his hands together in private. Ah, what a glorious thing it is to serve the public, especially to blow a moral trumpet before it! How it must impart an inward joy, a sense of usefulness and a proper self-estimation! But Mr. McCreed conceals all his happiness from the public, and appears as calm and undisturbed as ever.

The work goes on. The piles of stone and wood assume form and beauty. The din of hammers and the shouting of men begin to diminish. The painters and frescoers drive out the carpenters, and are, in turn, ejected by the upholsterers. The heaps of rubbish begin to be cleared up. The curious committee adjourn to the interior. At length the noise all ceases, and Mr. McCreed stands contemplating the work

with a smiling countenance. No wonder he smiles, for his purpose is accomplished. The church is completed.

Excellent Mr. McCreed! How can the results of this glorious enterprise be estimated? How can any one fail to acknowledge the worth of its noble projector, who stands contemplating the edifice with such a smiling face? And how his heart must swell within him as he reads—of course he reads his Bible—"Go, sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow me."

So the church was built and it was a wonder to behold. So attractive in its quiet grace that the passers often stopped to admire it, and as their eyes wandered up the beautiful spire and wearied themselves by gazing at its lofty summit, you might hear an exclamation, "what a good man Mr. McCreed is!" Whether there was anything in that grandly conspicuous spire to remind one of Mr. McCreed or not, it is impossible to say. Perhaps the gaze of the bystanders rested on the tower last, as being the most beautiful part of the edifice. Be it as it may, they looked at the spire and said, "what a public benefactor Mr. McCreed is!" There was a bell in the tower—a loud and sweet toned bell. Rich music to the ears of Mr. McCreed was this bell, and he had it rung every day, till the whole city had learned its sound perfectly, and the citizens would say, "Ah! there goes that bell again—the bell on Mr. McCreed's church—what a grand and solemn tone it has!" The interior of the church was handsomely finished, with all the modern conveniences. The great organ would draw tears from your eyes, as it poured forth a thrill of music so expressive that you could seem to distinguish its language—a soft, sad story of sorrow and destitution; of sin and ignorance, and then of benevolent hearts which had throbbed with pity; of benevolent pockets which had opened to relieve all the want and suffering, and then a full gush of sound overpowered you, and you murmured, "oh, what a virtue is benevolence," and thought of Mr. McCreed. Then all the church corresponded to the grand attractive organ. The cushioned pews seemed to say, "come unto me ye that are weary." The pulpit was comfortable. None of your blank, staring pulpits, with an association of blunt and unwelcome truths clinging all about them! None of your lean pinched pulpits with so little elbow room for the preacher that he becomes irritable and turns out a thorough and savage radical in every respect! No! none of these! A cozy, cushioned, carpeted, lounging sort of a pulpit, which seemed to set a man at ease on the instant. "Nothing but gentle and pleasant words can issue from this place," the pulpit seemed to say. "No forbidding

and unpleasant truths shall be uttered here." "Peace, sleepy soul, you shall be undisturbed!" Just such an air of rest pervaded the whole sanctuary. Even the fresco work seemed quiet and peaceful, unlike that in ordinary churches, where the shadows all appear to have been crowded down on the wrong side and to lay there in an exceedingly uncomfortable manner, while the figures protruding seem to say, "peel us off! we don't belong here! we're stuck on against our will!" Not so the frescoes in Mr. McCreed's church. Even the brackets for the gas seemed pushing out their heads from little holes in the wall, in a sleepy and agreeable way. Peace everywhere. And now the papers announced the "approaching dedication of the church of our fellow-citizen, Mr. McCreed," and the ordination of a pastor—a smooth tongued, popular preacher. So the solemn new bell rang its proudest peal, and the insinuating organ discoursed of charity in its sweetest tones, and pealed forth its praises of public benefactors. The people crowded in and filled the comfortable seats, and the good natured pulpit welcomed them all and set them at ease. Eyes wandered over the fresco, and the pendants, and all the ornaments. They looked at the congregation and at the new minister, and helped the ears take notes of the whole performance till it was over, and the whole church was left alone to repose in a new sense of importance.

So the church was built and dedicated. A congregation began to gather within its walls—the morals of the community were kept in check if not improved, and the real estate near the building advanced rapidly in value. Mr. McCreed had several land-sales and disposed of his lots to so good advantage that the excellent people said, "see how benevolence meets its own reward!" The poor of the vicinity rejoiced at the new and excellent opportunity of hearing the word. They were deeply grateful to Mr. McCreed. Of course! They joined the general song of praise to the public benefactor. Widow Tal joined it—a widow of three weeks, poor woman!—as she sank on her knees in her little cottage, within hearing of the laudatory organ. She was to leave the house on the morrow because the expenses of her husband's sickness had eaten up the rent. It was a paltry sum to be sure, but Mr. McCreed could not afford to lose it, for he had spent much money upon the church. So he told his new clerk, for since the church was done he had employed a young man to look after his growing rents. The sound of the organ came to the ears of the poor widow as she wrestled there upon her knees, and her crushed heart echoed the strain, of course! And as she left her home on the next day for a temporary residence

with a poor neighbor, she undoubtedly thought, "how blessed to spend one's money for a church, even if one has to suffer in purse!" Then she looked at the beautiful spire and sighed. Yes, and many another poor tenant joined in the song, for they, all of them, were enlisted in the charitable work—so their rent bill said, as it appeared increased in amount. The increase appeared to be on account of the rise in real estate, but every poor man thought of the church as he looked at the additional item. Yes, they joined in the song, for they were interested in the church.

So the church was built and great comfort Mr. McCreed took in it. He took pride in embellishing it. He bought him a new pair of horses in order to ride in haste to the store, whenever he thought of some new addition which he could make to its ornaments. He built him a new house and furnished it elegantly, and laid out his grounds in a most tasteful manner, so as to correspond somewhat to the church, and to the fine buildings which were now rapidly springing up around him. Great comfort in the new church! Some malicious persons nodded their heads and said, "magnificent speculation!" Speculation, indeed! What says the public voice? What say the papers? Do they say speculation? What say the good Christians—the praying men who trust in Providence and look upon Mr. McCreed as an instrument of good in the hands of God? What say the poor who pay their tithes into his coffers? What say the bursting coffers themselves? Speculation, indeed!

Contemplate the benevolent man as he sits in his easy pew in the church! See his unruffled brow. A serenity, almost Christain, is resting there. His eyes are closed. He is meditating. What is the course of his thoughts—the serene McCreed? Is he thinking whether his benevolence will give him a better chance for the inheritance of the kingdom than the poverty of spirit recommended by the Scriptures? Is he thinking whether his public morality will balance the weight of his ledger accounts on the last day! Peace, good Mr. McCreed! The church will do its work! After thy name has faded from thy monument; after other public benefactors have put their shoulders to the wheel, we may see the result. A few more years of toil and prayer, and Christians may exult in their victory; the church of God will have taken the place of the church of man and mammon, and then the whole world shall see the glory of the Lord.