

**STUDENT LIFE AT AMHERST
COLLEGE: ITS
ORGANIZATIONS, THEIR
MEMBERSHIP AND HISTORY**

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Student Life at Amherst College: Its Organizations, Their Membership and History by George Rugg Cutting

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GEORGE RUGG CUTTING

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STUDENT LIFE

AT

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ITS ORGANIZATIONS,

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Cutting, George Rugg.

Ὅσοι παῖδες Ἀθηναίων ἐβόλοντο
Φαιεννῶν κρητὶς ἐλευθερίας.



AMHERST:
HATCH & WILLIAMS.
1871.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

"The happiest of life's days are College days."

The author of this work claims for it neither originality nor literary merit. The History of the Literary Societies was not originally designed for publication, but simply as a paper to be read before the Athenian Society. At the suggestion and urgent requests of both the Faculty of the College and a large number of the Graduates, it is offered to the Students and Alumni of Amherst College in permanent form, in the hope that, with all its inaccuracies and incompleteness, it may evoke some pleasant memories of College Days.

It is believed that the sketch of the College Periodical Literature is quite complete, and it is here published that all who are interested in this department of College activity, may gain a comprehensive view of the labors of those who have striven to promote the reputation of the College in this field of enterprise.

The names of those who have gained the highest College Honors at Commencement, and a sketch of the rise of "Class Day," with the Class Day Officers, are given, not only as matters of reference, but that further reminiscences of these occasions may be suggested in the minds of those to whom the mention of a name calls forth numberless recollections.

"College Clubs, Customs, Amusements," etc., will doubtless recall some scenes of college life, pleasant in themselves, doubly so in their memories.

In presenting a list of the Graduate members of the Societies represented in Chapter V., and the complete membership of those in chapter VI., we are confident that we are offering the most complete history of these societies that could possibly be written.

A "Statistical History of the College" is subjoined, as a partial table of reference, until a complete "History of Amherst College,"—now in preparation by Professor W. S. TYLER,—shall appear.

The accuracy of Chap. V. is almost wholly due to JOHN A. BENNETT, '73, Librarian of Alexandria.

The author is especially indebted to ROBERT C. ROCKWELL, '71, for valuable aid in preparation of the work.

To one and all the Alumni who have assisted us, we would extend our heartfelt thanks, and venture to express the hope that this meagre contribution to the history of Student life in Amherst College may afford some little pleasure to those who have spent four years of College life at Amherst.

GEORGE R. CUTTING.

Amherst College, July 1st, 1871.

ARCHIVES OF THE SOCIETIES.

The archives of most of the Societies are imperfectly preserved. No records of the Alexandrian Society previous to June 25, 1838, or of the Athenian Society previous to Oct. 12, 1825, are to be found.

The archives of "Social Union," so long missing, are at length safely deposited in the College Library.

We find a few allusions to sketches of these societies which have been written at different times in their history, but not a single trace of one is to be found among the scattered archives. The carelessness of those whose duty it has been to preserve these is without excuse.

On May 17th, 1871, both Alexandria and Athenæ passed this resolve: "Hereafter, all records and papers of interest, relative to this Society, shall be immediately deposited in a box of archives to be kept in the College Library."

As a result of this action we confidently hope that he who writes the history of our Literary Societies at the *Centennial Anniversary of Amherst College*, may have more complete data for his work.

PREFATORY LETTER

FROM

PROFESSOR W. S. TYLER

Dear Sir:—You ask my opinion of the value of the Literary Societies to college students, and, in particular, to the students of Amherst College. I have no hesitation in answering that among all the collateral and auxiliary means of culture, which have existed in our American colleges, the Literary Societies, in my judgment, hold the highest place, the Libraries alone, perhaps, excepted. I have known a great many students, who have misused and abused both the Literary Societies and the Libraries, by making them not auxiliary but principal studies, and spending the greater part of their time in these fascinating diversions. Such students never lay broad and deep foundations, and seldom build much higher in future life, than they did in college. But I have known a far greater number of students, who have erred in the opposite direction, and neglected entirely one or both of these helps to a wide and useful culture.

The Literary Societies afford an excellent opportunity for practice in writing and speaking; and it is "practice" that "makes perfect" in every art, especially in that art of expression, which should be cultivated simultaneously with the acquisition of knowledge, and without which knowledge is *not* power, to influence or inspire others. Nor are the friendly criticism, the generous emulation, the social culture,

the power of personal influence, the knowledge of parliamentary usages, and the management of common and public affairs, to which these Societies give scope and exercise, to be undervalued and despised. It may be a sign that I am growing old, though I believe I am not usually regarded as much of an old fogy; but I can not help sighing for "the good old times," when Alexandrian, Athenian, and Social Union were sacred names, when every student joined one or another of these societies, and attended the weekly meetings as regularly as he did the daily recitations, and would no more "flunk" an appointment in the Society, than an appearance in his turn on the stage,—when the wealthier members vied with each other in their donations to the Libraries, as all the members did in maintaining and defending the honor and good name of their favorite society, with much the same chivalrous devotion with which the Knight fought for his lady love in the Middle Ages. And then such orations as we used to have every Commencement from such statesmen and orators as Everett and McDowell, and Seward and Sumner! How they stirred our youthful minds and hearts, to emulate their wisdom and eloquence, as Thucydides was stirred by the rehearsals of Herodotus, as Demosthenes was inspired by the eloquence of Callistratus, as Themistocles was moved by the laurels of Miltiades!

But pardon these recollections. I fear they will seem egotistic to you, to me they are sacred. You know I am living these days under the shadows of the half century that is drawing so near to its close.

I am glad you have written the history of these societies. It will be read with interest by all your brothers of the Alumni, and by none with more interest than those of the earlier decades.