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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1904

THE ORATORICAL CONTEST

The time for holding the class oratorical contests is drawing close. These class contests are the preliminary steps in the work of choosing our orators for the inter-state and inter-collegiate contests, and as a matter of public information, the principal regulations governing the class contests are hereto appended:

"At some time before the Christmas vacation of each year, the several classes shall hold oratorical contests in which any member is entitled to participate."

"A committee of three members of the faculty appointed by the President of the University, shall act as judges and shall decide the person or persons entitled to represent the class in the local inter-class contest. Should any class fail to hold such preliminary contest, it shall be deprived of its representative in the inter-class contest and the vacancy or vacancies shall be filled by taking one who is deemed to have won second place in one of the other contests, junior, senior, sophomore, freshman in the order mentioned; provided, however, that in case there be but one contestant in a class he shall be required only to deliver his oration before the judges to make him eligible to a place in the inter-class contest."

"Each orator shall be allowed to choose his own subject."

"The orations shall not contain more than fifteen hundred words."

Now the University needs her best orators to represent us in the inter-state and inter-collegiate contests, and orators do not grow in a night, nor can they be raised in hotbeds at the eleventh hour. The liberal provisions under which the

class contests are held, make it possible for every one in college to take part, and try for a place in the inter-class contest. With a spiritless and unexciting lot of class contests, the University is not likely to have the best representatives, but simply those she can get. The importance, then, of each class holding a well-represented contest is obvious. If each class will furnish its very best, the inter-class contest will be strong. If each member of each class who is at all able to compete, will do his duty to his class, the classes will be able to send their best men into the inter-class contest. It should be the personal care of the heads of the classes to see that all the available oratorical timber in their respective classes is brought from the woods and worked into its best shape. The University must have that support actuated by feeling of personal responsibility, if she is to come out victorious. Our football and track teams and glee club, spare no effort to pick representative teams from the squads that yearly present themselves, and if the man they want does not happen to be in the squad, they usually get him anyway. The same care in selection should hold in the choosing of orators, and there should be the same abundance of good material to choose from. The same early training which is such a matter of course in athletics or music, should no less characterize the work of our orators. The deep and extensive reading, the hours of meditation and thought, the repeated recasting and remodelling, absolutely necessary to the birth of the passable oration, cannot be without an early start, and, that an oration cannot come into existence without such reading, meditation and recasting, it is not necessary to say. The departments of English and oratory are ready and eager to get hold of and assist every possible aspirant, but without material to work on, our instructors' efforts will be of little avail. It lies largely with the students, then, to say what kind of orators we shall have, and whether we shall be represented by our best or not. Every collegian who has any aptitude in public speaking should realize the duty resting upon him in the matter of the local contests, and should lose no time in getting into line for the approaching events. If you are a little new at the University, don't let that stand in your way, for all have the same chances in the inter-class contest.

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