

The Local Contest.

"While words of learned length and thundering sound,
Amazed the gazing rustics rang'd around;
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew."

Another local contest is a thing of the past, and the multitudes are satisfied, dissatisfied, or indifferent as to the outcome. Seven orators have again sacrificed themselves upon the public hearth, and six of them will plod through life with ambition unsated in this direction. The handful of contests this year only strengthen the oft-repeated assertion, "What a lottery it is." One judge is moved by one thing, another judge picks out a man for another reason. The audience as the most practical judge, often decide that neither are right and select the popular speaker, whose only reward is the praise received from a host of appreciative friends. But it is ever thus. While one conquers a score or more must be satisfied with "it might have been so." Ambition withers, only to blossom again in another place, and most likely in another pursuit. Each successive disappointment only presses forward more strongly the arguments of predestination. A remedy is offered. Defeat grasps for it. "Always look on the dark side of life and disappointments will not produce such a dark cloud, while, if the fates are generous enough to place victory within reach, the recipient may then enjoy the treat." On every side the whispers of discouraged orators who have braved the doubtful storm repeat the simple saying, "I told you so!" The world moves on, and the past is soon forgotten. The winner of to-day is burdened with the thought of to-morrow. He may then run up against a stumbling-block, and the glass-like crown falls to the ground and is shattered into a thousand pieces, never to be repaired.

But to return to the contest. More enthusiasm has been taken in oratory this year than ever before, despite the fact that the faculty as a whole are accused by some of being opposed to contests for fear they may detract

some from the studies they are presiding over. Those who have had practical experience will agree, however, that the time spent upon an oration is worth more to them than many a three-hour study carried on in the class room. The student must have practice. This is why experience in newspaper writing, in public speaking as well as in the sciences, gives the student what he can never get in the class room, nor from years of theoretical study of rhetoric. If there are any instructors in the institution that would crush out oratory because it might tend to detract some from class interest, they should not be allowed to continue their work in this institution "whose crowning glory is its democratic character, that it exists for all alike, and that its opportunities are freely offered to all." Last year only three aspirants raised their voices in thunderous appeal; this year seven were willing to shoulder the responsibility of representing the University in the state contest and win laurels in far Ohio at the next interstate contest. The interest manifested drew out a full house, the University contingent being fairly well augmented by the other colleges. The stage was neatly decorated with flags, University colors, and palms. Col. Owen's electric light plant was very sulky and finally struck. It is said that it had been laid off for a week or two for economy's sake, and objected to being pressed into duty on this occasion.

After a few introductory remarks by President Bently, the program was opened by Veda V. Sheppard with a piano solo, "Valse le Bal." E. M. Pollard delivered the first oration of the evening, "The Indeterminate Sentence." It was the oration that only gave him fourth place in the recent Chase and Wheeler contest, but a new shake of the box brought him lot No. 2. Mr. Pollard's delivery was better than at his last appearance, but his manuscript did not show much improvement. Mr. T. G. Ryan spoke upon "A Social Revolution." His matter was well collected, but he did not speak in a very animated tone. H. T. Ricketts' oration was