

for if Palladian traditions have held, as they undoubtedly have, even your undergraduates many of them feel that some of the most character strengthening experiences of their college life have come to them through college politics.

Some of the reasons which made the society invaluable to those of an earlier generation have passed away with the introduction of thesis and report and library work in all the classes. But in at least three respects the society serves you as the classes never can: (1) It gives you opportunities for free and attractive but not expensive social life and training. (2) It gives you long and repeated practice before public audiences. (Let me say, that one of the most valuable things under point two is that it gives you repeated opportunities to make fools of yourselves. I know from personal experience that there are few things in life that give as much concentrated discipline as for a man to say in public something that he thinks is smart, and then to have the shuddering conviction go through him that it did not "take." It is well to have this experience come to one while he is still young). (3) The society gives you weekly practice in the art of associated action, that is in practical politics. You learn the possibilities and the limitations of deliberative assemblies; you learn how awkward such bodies are, and how to help in the work of making them more efficient. It is the best training for citizenship that there is.

Some of the chief lessons that one learns from political experience in an open literary society can be easily stated, as for instance that bad institutions help to make bad men, and that the two react upon each other. I recall an early experience in the matter of proxies. Our rules had not been made with sinister intent, but they were defective and mischievous. Some of the earliest elections that I witnessed in the Palladian were won by absentees or the proxies that were voted in their name. Their dues were paid and in some cases their proxies forged by friends or others who easily assumed that the absent

persons would be willing could they know the facts. It was one of the best preparatory schools for political crime I ever saw, and it was equally good practice in political reform when we girded up our loins and abolished proxies. If all the machinery of voting had not been brought to pretty satisfactory shape the fight which resulted in the adoption of the anti-fraternity amendments could never have gone off in the business-like way it did. The two factions watched each other like lynxes, but our machinery was good enough so that there was no opportunity for either side to do underhand work.

Another thing that college politics teaches is the political futility of speech-making unless backed by good organization and constant personal effort. Senator Quay does not have a livelier appreciation of this truth than some of us acquired in our college days. In the battle royal just referred to our side caucussed every day, and the entire caucuss soon knew the roll of the society by heart, just how each member would vote and whether or not there was a conceivable chance to change his views. The slates were worked for political purposes, there being two of course, one barb and one frat. I remember to have taken a young lady with the purpose of insuring past all doubt her neutrality, that being the policy which she had announced for herself, and being as favorable a decision as our side could look for from her. Do not misunderstand me to say that organization and personal effort is everything in politics. With an honest constituency, or a constituency that can be educated into honesty, the essential element of continued success is the justice of the cause, but no cause is so good as to do its own fighting. The reasonableness of the arguments pro and con was I believe the determining factor in the anti-fraternity fight, but I am perfectly sure that our speech-making on the final evening did not change a single vote.

There is no doubt that in the hopeful movements which we have seen of late for civil service reform, for ballot reform, for