

## THE STATE CONTEST.

### A Good Programme and an Unique Decision.

On Wednesday, the 15th of April, in the city of Hastings was duly held the first contest of the great and only Nebraska Collegiate Oratorical Association. A dozen students of the University were in attendance, also giant intellects from Doane college to the number of ten. With these exceptions the audience was a large and cultured one. The stage decorations were profuse and in good taste, being, for the most part, flowers and painted canvas. In the midst of these tropical glories was placed the form of G. W. Horton, of Crete, whose moustache and boots had been thoroughly rubbed down and trained for the heavy parts they were to take in the coming tragedy.

The music for the evening was entirely orchestral, and the product of Hastings, which city also furnished one orator and nearly all the applause. It can thus be credited with giving its full share toward making up the entertainment. The exercises were opened with an invocation and a musical selection, after which Mr. A. G. Warner, of the University, was announced. The subject of the oration was "An Italian Monk," and its treatment was so original and striking, as to hold the entire attention of the audience from the first sentence to the close of the well-rounded peroration. Much had been expected of this speaker and, as he retired, a storm of applause gave the University delegation an assurance that their confidence in the superior strength of their representative was already shared by the audience. In order that we may not be charged with unfairness toward the remaining orators, we give report from a comparatively disinterested source, the *Hastings Gazette Journal*:

"After more music Mr. H. S. Braucht, of York was introduced. The subject of his oration was "Bigotry". Mr. Braucht has a fine, heavy voice and delivered his oration with that distinctness that is sure to favorably impress an audience. He had his subject well mastered, and although he showed signs of slight embarrassment at times, his superior talent as an orator was recognized.

Mr. J. H. H. Hewitt, of this city was next introduced and his subject "The Statecraft of Citizenship" announced. Mr. Hewitt though not possessed of a heavy voice, spoke with distinctness and without hesitation. His oration was a well-written, practical discourse on citizen-statesmanship and it was well delivered. The orator was loudly applauded, as he deserved to be.

The last orator on the program was A. V. House of Crete. His subject, "A Mistaken Policy", was well handled and during a portion of his address, was delivered with much force and effect. At times, however, his utterance became so indistinct and low that the audience was unable to hear what was being said. This was due, no doubt, to embarrassment which he showed more or less through the entire oration. But for this his oration would have made a much more favorable impression on the audience than it did. He seems quite young and much allowance was no doubt, made on this account for his hesitancy and indistinctness of his delivery.

The very delightful literary treat was closed with the announcement that the judges awarded first place to Mr. House, and second to Mr. Warner. If we were allowed

to make a suggestion for future contests we should recommend that each college society choose one of the judges and they together choose a fifth."

This mild statement of facts, especially in regard to the last speaker, was reinforced on the following day with the statements that the editor of the same paper had occupied a seat in the second row from the stage, but had been unable, with the closest attention, to hear Mr. House distinctly, and that toward the close he broke down and was unable to proceed without consulting his manuscript; that when the decision was announced "A murmur of dissent ran through the house," but the curtain immediately fell and there seemed no way in which to make an objection. The article closes with a castigation of the authors of the "scandalous decision," and intimates that the audience would have reversed it in a moment had there been an opportunity. Private letters confirm the impression that in the minds of nearly all who were present at the contest, the representative of the University should have been given first honor. Many declare the decision an "outrage," a "disgrace" and even go so far as to make ugly charges against not only judges, but various officers of the Association. As the representative of a defeated college the HESPERIAN has little to say on its own account. Important developments were made on the day following the contest, however, and a convention of the different institutions interested was called here on Wednesday, April 22nd, to take into consideration the alleged errors in the marking.

After an investigation it was made clear that, by accident the wrong figures had been footed up in the case of Judge Meiklejohn. He has been asked to give corrected figures and they will be placed upon the records. The result will probably alter the final result only in giving the University third place instead of second, which condition of affairs is looked upon by all parties as decidedly ludicrous. The discovery made after the contest that one of the Judges is connected with Doane College as a member of the Examining Board, and thus ineligible to the position, according to the constitution, also adds humor to the situation. Taken in connection with Agee's mark of 100 in delivery when the recipient of that flattering grade broke down utterly, it "gives away" the combination against the University so completely that no further remarks are necessary. "The field is against us," and if the State Association does not care to make right a decision that is tacitly acknowledged unjust by every college represented, this institution can not afford to continue its membership in such an organization.

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