

PALLADIAN ORATORS.

THIRD ANNUAL CHASE AND WHEELER PRIZE CONTEST
IN ORATORY.

Saturday evening, January 30, was the date for this friendly trial of strength between members of the Palladian society. The founders of this contest are two well known members of the class of '83, Messrs. Clement Chase and Dan. H. Wheeler, Jr. who are now engaged in business at Omaha. Their gift of ten dollars for first prize is supplemented by a second prize of five dollars given by the society. These contests are of a character to draw out cultured and critical audiences, and the present one was no exception to the rule. The chapel had received no special decoration, as it is certainly pretty enough for any kind of entertainment in its every-day clothes. At an early hour the room was filled with University people and a large sprinkling of citizens who as a rule show a gratifying interest in the literary efforts of the students. The exercises were opened with a piano duet, "Il Trovatore," by Misses Grace and May Pershing, which was executed with the vim and dash so characteristic of the playing of these talented young ladies. The first speaker, Mr. W. S. Perrin, was then announced. He said in his oration on

A COSMOPOLITAN POET,

It is human nature to under-rate the ability of those who cross our path. Modern literary criticism is not free from this spirit, and literature suffers much thereby. The majority, however, freed from this spirit of ignorance and selfishness, acknowledge his right to fame the best, whose life-work bettered most his fellow-men. One, thus successful, thus ideal in much, and yet unduly criticised, is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. To prove him "unduly criticised," is the task we undertake, to offer our pitiful praise, the subject of our theme. In proof that Mr. Longfellow possesses the higher poetical powers, and especially *imaginative power*, the greatest of all, we cite his "Skeleton in Armor." But he excels in the mild and graceful,—the artistic style, so befitting Longfellow, the poet and gentleman. This craving for a distinct national literature, is lamentable. Human nature is the common theme, and human nature is everywhere the same. Universal sentiment must be the source of inspiration, and genius, cosmopolitan the selfishness of others can never take from us our literary heritage, and our own pride can never create for us another. Shakespeare and Milton are as truly ours as if they had lived this side Atlantis' sunken isle, and in this nineteenth century. Longfellow, then, sung a truly native air, since he sung the superstitions and legends of his country. That there are strains in his songs which ring of other climes as well, proves him only a master of his art, that he knows to choose the best. His was pre-eminently a religious work,—to prepare his Puritanic countrymen for the new phase of life, then dawning. This was his greatest work. It was, withal, a work of preparation, and, as it is meet, was executed by a master hand.

Mr. Perrin spoke with his usual earnestness, though suffering from a slight cold that could but detract from the effect of his delivery. The applause that followed the conclusion of this well-finished production indicated that the efforts of the speaker were fully appreciated by the audience.

Mr. W. N. Fletcher was then announced, and took his position with deliberation and a firmness that promised well for his first appearance on a special programme. His oration, a synopsis of which is given below, was an eulogy on Stephen A. Douglas, whom he characterized as

LINCOLN'S RIVAL

Douglas deserves an important place in American history. He was endowed with wonderful talents, and they were always given to his country,—self made subservient to the interests of his countrymen. Strictly partisan, yet never swerving from the path of duty, never abandoning justice; endeavoring always to raise his party, he at all times showed a broadness of view that proves him to be above the demagogue. No mere politician, but a man of the people, it was he who said "Let not that be forced upon a free people by any power, which that people do not want." In the "War of the Pamphlets," where he was matched with the most able jurists of the American bar, he brought out clearly and distinctly the creed and the truths of Democracy. In rank as a statesman he stands with Washington, Webster and Clay. His mission was that of mediation. He possessed the power to overthrow the Union, but when the critical point came, declared himself for Union, first, last, and all the time.

Mr. Fletcher has a voice of extraordinary strength, and he had no difficulty in making himself heard. His natural tendency to speak rapidly and vehemently was so far overcome as to make his delivery a surprise even to his friends. The oration was on the whole an unusual one, and very creditable to the speaker. Under proper training Mr. Fletcher will develop into an orator second to none in the University.

Following this number came a vocal solo "A Little Mountain Boy," by Miss Mary Leonard, which was enthusiastically applauded

GRANT THE COMMANDER.

Was the subject chosen by Miss Glen Talbot. The object of the inquiry was to determine his place in military history. As chief Magistrate he was not a success, as general, he *never failed*. From no sudden dash, no single brilliant exploit, sprang his fame. He won his way by steady work, against the enmity of politicians and rivals. His clear judgment, his calmness in every trial, his quickness of decision and firmness gave him victory. He was not a butcher, but a man who did not flinch when blood was demanded by the brazen gods of war. He never flinched, and never was defeated. He commanded more men than Xerxes, his forces extended over more territory than those of Napoleon. Xerxes and Napoleon met defeat, but Grant *never failed*; he was less a butcher and more a general than either of them. Circumstances may have been happy for the fame of Grant. The north was destined to crush the rebellion and would have done so inevitably without him, but after making all deductions, history will find his military career unsurpassed.

Miss Talbot's appearance was pleasing. She speaks clearly and with spirit. Her style is hardly oratorical, however, a fact disadvantageous to her in a contest. The oration was compact and original, and was accorded an attentive hearing. The next exercise was a discussion of the decline of the power of

SPAIN.

Mr. C. S. Polk said that the present condition of Spain is due as well to the fact that she has not advanced, as it is to the fact that she has receded. Spain, at the close of the 15th century was the most powerful nation on the globe, but there were elements of character in her people that prevented her from remaining in that position. Superstition which was the outgrowth of the Moorish conquest was one of the main elements. Their disdain of labor and peculiar views upon what constituted wealth, caused the decay of their industries and led to suffering and starvation. She is today an object of contempt, and has no hope for a better future unless she sacrifices her pride and bigotry. She