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The following, written by Albert Watkins, is copied from the *State Journal*. Ex-Postmaster Watkins is a man of wide and accurate observation, and whatever he says upon this question is worthy of respectful attention:

A noteworthy incident connected with the succession of Mr. Vilas to the senatorial chair occupied by Mr. Spooner recalls the fact that both of these gentlemen were in attendance upon the University of Wisconsin at the same time. I fail to remember the exact date but it occurs to me that they were classmates. If not, they went through college at about the same time, and not more than a year or two could have elapsed between their days of graduation. It is a little singular that the men who went through college together should sustain such political relations in later life; but to me it is not surprising that the retiring and the incoming senators from Wisconsin should be graduates of the university maintained by that state. Along with Vilas and Spooner a large number of able men went out from this university about a quarter of a century ago, and many of them have left their impress upon the political and educational history of Wisconsin as well as upon other states. I have thought over this question long and carefully and have arrived at the conclusion that the college debating clubs of the old times had much to do with the vigor and consequent success of the men who were graduated in the early days of the university. At that time the students took more interest in the college debating clubs than any outside or purely social affairs. They received splendid discipline in the art of oratory and equipped themselves for the forensic battles in which they have since engaged with such success.

I am sorry to say that the literary societies that gave such invaluable training in oratory, extemporaneous speaking and debate to the young men attending the University of Wisconsin twenty-five years ago are no longer a power in that institution. They have been crippled by the increasing popularity of the social and fraternal clubs, known as the Greek letter societies. Madison is dotted with the club houses of these organizations. I have inquired into their effect upon the students, and cannot escape the conviction that they have emasculated the old debating clubs, and taken away the most valuable part of the education of the young men, giving in return only pleasure to the members and added social polish. The new system is not turning out the strong, eloquent, well equipped men that marked the era in which Vilas and Spooner pursued their studies. The list of the distinguished graduates of the university will show dozens of names of men who owe their success and prominence to the training in public speaking gained in the debating clubs of the old days. If the new system is doing anything in the same line for the students the effects are not apparent. I can see nothing in the fraternity idea that will return to the colleges of the country one-half of the benefits that they take away. Certainly there are no influences at Madison at present that will build up men like those graduated in the years of the ascendancy of the debating clubs, and for that reason I look upon the growth of the Greek letter organizations with sincere regret.