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John D. Guthrie

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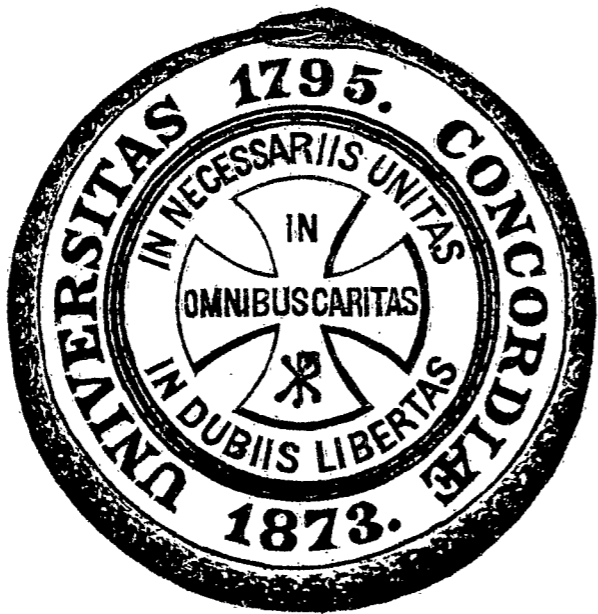
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No. 19.

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VOL. XXV.

UNION COLLEGE, MARCH 13, 1902.

No. 19.

SHYLOCK.

[Text of a lecture delivered by Prof. John I. Bennett before the Shakespeare Club on March 11.]

On the occasion of Sir Henry Irving's recent visit to Albany it was my privilege to see him as Shylock in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. I thought at the time that his rendering of the part, wonderful as it was in some respects, was as a whole little better than a caricature. But on re-reading the play I came to the conclusion that Irving's characterization is substantially correct. My own conception of Shylock was something like this: Shylock is a Jew. He is therefore persecuted, and being persecuted he is become suspicious, cruel, vindictive. I am aware that this view is not without its element of truth, nor without its stout champions either. Irving himself was once among them if we may judge from the account of his first appearance in the part in 1874, which is quoted in the Appendix to Furness' Variorum Edition of *The Merchant of Venice*; but persecution while it is not wholly lacking as an element in Shakespeare's depiction of Shylock, is a much less conspicuous one than is commonly supposed. Irving has now reduced it to the minimum and his conception of the part is quite the opposite of the one I have stated: Shylock is suspicious, cruel, vindictive; therefore a Jew and persecuted. This, I think, is much nearer to Shakespeare's Shylock than the other view. Indeed the faults in Irving's rendering of the part are not in his interpretation as a whole, but in details of elocution and of acting. It is precisely the avoidance of such eccentricities, let me say in passing, that makes Ellen Terry's Portia perfect. I am aware that Shylock is not Portia, but by your leave, neither is Irving Ellen Terry. Ellen Terry is not eccentric. Neither is Shakespeare.

* * * * *

Here Prof. Bennett read some lines "A Tribute to a Door Mat." Continuing he said:

"At all events the lines may hardly be said to have the quality of Shakespeare, even of Shakespeare's prose, but if the thing is to be intolerably mouthed and gurgled and nosed, will not the door mat do as well as these words of Shylock? "Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die; and if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it will go hard, but I will better the instruction."

No, No! Let us give the Devil his due though he can "cite Scripture for his purpose." We've paid the price of admission. We'll hear the words.

* * * * *

These deductions then (and manner makes or mars the perfect work in acting Shakespeare) must be made from Irving's rendering of Shylock. If we disagree with the rest, I suspect that it is because the wish is father of the thought. But we have no right to believe what we wish to believe in reading an author. Our duty is to understand him and his thoughts and not merely to fasten our own thoughts and opinions upon him. After we do understand him, we may agree with him or disagree with him, but that is a different matter. There is a Greek proverb which says that "the unflogged man is not educated." Now one of the most necessary delusions to flog out of a man, but withal one of the most difficult is precisely this, that he can put into his author the

meaning that most suits his own view. To-night I should like to flog out of myself my own pre-conceptions with regard to Shylock, and to try to find out what Shakespeare's conception of him was. And perhaps the first step to take will be to consider what the status of Jew was in England, during and just prior to Shakespeare's time.

It was long supposed that the edict of Edward I in 1290 drove the Jews out of England as effectually as St. Patrick's staff drove all venomous beasts out of Ireland, the progenitors of Tammany excepted. It was further supposed that Jews did not return to England until they were permitted to do so by legal enactment under the Protectorate. Certain it is though that there was a goodly sprinkling of Jews in England in Shakespeare's time and certain it is too that as a race they were looked upon as they are to this day in some less enlightened countries than our own. Jew-baiting would seem to have been in about as good esteem as bear-baiting. The most remarkable expression of this national antipathy prior to Shakespeare's time is Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* written in 1588 or thereabouts. This play is important alike as an evidence of the popular feeling with regard to the Jews, and as an anticipation of Shakespeare's "*Merchant of Venice*."

* * * * *

Prof. Bennett then gave an outline of Marlowe's play.

This Congreice of blood and thunder seems absurd enough to us, but never think it did in its own day and age; on the contrary it was perhaps the prime favorite among English tragedies for a considerable term of years. Nor ever think that Marlowe was a weakling. At the time of his death (he died at the age of twenty-nine) he was a poet of greater promise and of greater performance too than Shakespeare himself, who was but two months his junior; and as it is, his is generally agreed to be the second greatest name in the history of English dramatic literature. And further, you have but to read *The Jew of Malta* in detail, to see how heavy a tribute Shakespeare laid upon this very play in writing *The Merchant of Venice*. He borrowed from its characters,

he borrowed from its situations, he borrowed from its very lines, always of course improving what he took as was his wont. However, all this is aside from my present purpose, for I have spoken of Marlowe's play somewhat at length merely to introduce it as a document in evidence with regard to the popular feeling toward the Jew in Marlowe's and Shakespeare's day. It has to be sure other motives especially in the first two acts, but after the beginning of the third act, it rapidly becomes a pamphlet of race hatred and so continues to the end.

In 1594 there occurred in London an incident which strongly evidenced the popular hatred of the Jew, and which probably influenced Shakespeare a good deal in writing *The Merchant of Venice*. There was at that time in London, a Jewish doctor named Roderigo Lopez, who by his abilities had gained the favor of many persons of note and had risen to be the physician to the Queen herself. Some time previously there had come to England a Portuguese refugee named Antonio Perez, a pretender to the throne of Portugal. He and his designs were entertained with favor, because of the strong anti-Spanish sentiment which was then prevalent in England, for Philip of Spain was plotting to annex Portugal, and Perez might be made an instrument to thwart his purpose. Lopez was made interpreter to Perez but in the end quarrelled with him, for Perez was a disagreeable fellow and managed to incur the enmity of all who had to do with him. Indeed Lopez finally entered into a plot to poison the pretender. The first time Perez was taken sick, he should die he said. Later Lopez was urged to join a conspiracy against the Queen's life, which he refused to do; but Exeter, animated by a private grudge, extorted some incriminating evidence from him by torture, and though his guilt was never proved to the satisfaction of the Queen, she finally consented to his execution, and he was hanged in the presence of a delighted populace amid cries of "He is a Jew." The outburst of race hatred which was provoked by this occurrence was immense. There were twenty representations of *The Jew of Malta* before the end of the year. Perez, the plot against his life having

come to light, became a kind of hero, and it is conjectured, not without good show of reason, that Shakespeare named after him, the title character in *The Merchant of Venice*, which was written before 1598 and therefore while the episode was still fresh in the popular mind; for race enmities are slow to abate.

Would Shakespeare have allowed himself to be influenced by such prejudices? No doubt, To be sure he has said some bitter words about the rabble, but mostly in character, or a least of such a sort as he hardly thought his own rabble could take to heart; for he has a keen eye to the prejudices of his audience and not unfrequently strikes to them. Besides, Shakespeare was none too fond of the Jews himself. "Jew is one of his stock epithets of opprobrium," "a Jew and a Hebrew" is a shade worse, and Sir John thinks he has laid himself under the most horrible of oaths of self condemnation when he says "I am a Jew, else an Ebrew Jew." "Liver of blaspheming Jew" is, as you remember among the ingredients of the witches broth in Macbeth, and it must be said that it is in very noxious company in the incantation.

Was this for the groundlings only? Hardly, else it would not be iterated so often. Shakespeare is pretty apt in his profanity. No, I believe that in this respect Shakespeare was a true child of his age, a child of his time and not of eternity. It was a case of imperfect sympathy and more than two hundred years later, Charles Lamb, the most lovable of English authors, so far as I know, next to Shakespeare, analyzed the feeling about as it is personified in Shylock. "I have, in the abstract, no disrespect for Jews. They are a piece of antiquity compared with which Stonehenge is in its nonage. They date beyond the Pyramids. But I could not care to be in habits of familiar intercourse with any of that nation. I confess that I have not the nerves to enter their synagogues. Old prejudices cling about us. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of Lincoln. Centuries of injury, contempt and hate, on the one side, of cloaked revenge and hate, on the other, between our and their fathers, must and ought to affect the blood of the children. I cannot believe it can run clear and kindly yet;

or that a few fine words such as candour, liberality, the light of the nineteenth century, can close up the breaches of so deadly a disunion. A Hebrew is nowhere congenial to me. He is least distasteful to me on 'Change—for the mercantile spirit levels all distinctions, as all are beauties in the dark. I boldly confess I do not relish the approximation of Jew and Christian, which has become so fashionable. The reciprocal endearments have, to me, something hypocritical and unnatural in them. I do not like to see the Church and Synagogue kissing and congeeing in awkward postures of an affected civility. If *they* are converted, why do they not come over to us altogether? Why keep up a form of separation when the life of it is fled? If they can sit with us at table, why do they keck at our cookery? I do not understand these half convertites. Jews christianizing—Christians judaizing—puzzle me. I like fish or flesh. A moderate Jew is a more confounding piece of anomaly to me than a wet Quaker."

So spake Charles Lamb some eighty years ago. Surely those eighty years have not "closed up the breaches of the deadly disunion" which being bred of a distortion of true religion follows the persecuted as an evil fate followed the house Labdacus. Yet the disunion is not so great as it was even eighty years ago. In Shakespeare's time it was very great, and he was heir to it. Be it remembered further, that in the outset, Shylock was deemed a comic part, that it soon became a low comedy part, that it continued as such for a full century and a half, that Shylock was then transformed into an odious villain of the sort that we have in mind when we speak of a Shylock, and that no brief was really held for the Jew until 1814, when Edmund Kean, as Furness says, first represented him as more sinned against than sinning. The part is generally agreed to be essentially tragic now, but actors and play-goers and readers of Shakespeare are still pros and cons with regard to Shylock, just as they are mads and no-mads and north-northwest-mads with regard to Hamlet. Irving, though he seems to have started as a partisan of Shylock, is now, I believe, pretty frankly his foe. Is Irving right? I think so; but let us

refer the questions to certain passages in the play itself. These passages I have not chosen. I think, as the advocate of a particular view. My own predisposition was, as I have said, for Shylock and against Irving; but I have gone over the play with some care, and I believe that my predisposition was wrong.

Turn we to the third scene of the first act. Shylock and Bassanio enter in conversation about the proposed loan.

"Three thousand ducats; well?"

"Aye, sir, for three months."

"For three months; well?"

"For the which, as I told you Antonio shall be bound."

"Antonio shall become bound; well?"

Shylock's is a higgling tone, nor is this tone merely a disguise of other feelings. There is something of disguise about it, but it is real withal.

"May I speak with Antonio?" says Shylock.

"If it please you to dine with us." "Yes, to smell pork; to eat the habitation which your prophet the Nazarene conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." This is to us a perfectly explicable retort but racial to say the least, and cannot have been much to the liking of Shakespeare's England; and it is to be observed that the conclusion of the whole matter is as market question "What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?" And when Antonio enters this is Shylock's aside:

"How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for he is a Christian;
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him,
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, may bargains, and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest, bursed be my trite
If I forgive him."

Usance and Jerusalem here contend for Shylock, and Jerusalem comes in second, *longo sed intervallis*.

After Shylock's disquisition about eanlings, Antonio suggests that gold and silver are not ewes and rams. "I cannot tell" says Shylock. "I make it breed as fast." "Mark you this Bassanio" says Antonio in reply, "The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose," Shylock being the Devil, and Antonio, though not perhaps flautless in our sight, yet a very estimable person in the play. Now "Devil" is an epithet which is applied to Shylock with some iteration and usually in damnatory contexts; and I feel about Shylock the Devil in the play, very much as I do about Diabolus himself, the false accuser; the wily one; Satan, the adversary, "the fine gentleman" as Fluellen calls him: where there is so much smoke there must be some fire.

Take we this from Shylock:

"Signor Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine."

A vile affront to spit upon his Jewish gaberdine; a vile affront indeed! We are with Shylock here. I would as leave let a man tread on the tail of my coat as spit upon my gaberdine. And should he tread on the tail of my coat because I am a Christian, me thinks I would essay some pagan retaliations.

"Or" says Shylock,

"Shall I bend low and in a bondsman's key
With bated breath, and whispering humbleness

Say this:—

"Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a dag; another time
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much monies?"

Bravo! Shylock. This is from "moneys and usances" to gaberdine as it should be; but this is also from Shylock to Antonio. It is not customary to show one's hand before playing the cards. Shylock to Shylock went from gaberdine to the market place. And Antonio's hard reply,

"I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends, for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thy enemy;
Who if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty."

This reply, I say though it may jar on us somewhat, was I doubt not, widely applauded by pit and galleries.

Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, (delicious name) being duly sworn deposeth and saith as follows:—"Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow, and tempts me, saying to me, 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot,' or 'good Gobbo' or 'good Launcelot Gobbo,' use your legs, take the start, run away.' My conscience says, 'No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo;' or as aforesaid, 'honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.' Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: 'Via! says the fiend; 'away!' says the fiend; for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind,' says the fiend, 'and run.' Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, 'My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son,' or rather being an honest woman's son:—for indeed my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste;—Well, my conscience says, 'Launcelot, budge not!' 'Budge,' says the fiend. 'Budge not,' says my conscience. 'Conscience,' say I, 'you counsel well:' 'fiend,' say I, 'you counsel well:' to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark! is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly, the Jew is the devil incarnal; and in my conscience! my conscience is bnt a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment; I will run."

Why did Gobbo's conscience give him less friendly counsel than the fiend? Well, I must

disclaim all responsibility for Launcelot Gobbo's conscience, but I certainly can see nothing in Gobbo's implied portrait of his master to make him keck and squeam at flight, and certain it is that Gobbo thought "the devilhimself" a master preferable to "the very devil incarnal," to wit the Jew. And Gobbo, be it said, was not of a very morose or brooding disposition. Jessica in bidding him good-bye says:

I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness."

Why was the house hell? For the same reason,, I suppose, as t'other places of the same name is, rnd that reason being personified, was "the very devil incarnal," to wit the Jew. When Launcelot is gone, Jessica says:

"Alack, what heinous sin is it in me,
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners."

We barely escape hating Jessica by remembering all this, and Shakespeare did not frame her to be hated.

* * * * *

Skip we the daughter, the ducats, the daughter, the Christian ducats, the Justice, the law, the ducats, the daughter, the sealed bags of ducats, the double ducats, the jewels, the stones and the ducats; and let us not "bait fish withal," nor say aught of Leah's ring worth "a wilderness of monkeys" and therefore worth several wildernesses of ducats, of ducats, of ducats; nor let us hale Antonio to prison to the tune of "I'll have my bond," but having "exhaled" him let us go forthwith to the court of justice.

Now this trial scene, in spite of the Shylock's monstrous and vindictive cruelty, in spite of the wheiting of the knife, in spite of the scales, in spite of the convincing loveliness of Portia, in spite of the joy that comes with the thwarting of a vengeful purpose, seems to me inexpressibly sad. As Shylock staggers from the courtroom deprived of everything he holds most dear, his daughter, his wordly wealth, yes even his religion, I can hear nothing but the taunts of Gratiano and they sound most harsh and cruel

in my ears. Yet it is not so nominated in the play. Here was the height of the merriment, and Gratiano was the wag of the day. The young lady who something less than a hundred years ago, I believe, exclaimed as Shylock made his exit, "The man is wronged," was the first to pity the Jew so far as the records tell us, and she pitied him from her own good heart; for the intent of the scene is clear; never was there a more exultant humbling of a man, than the humbling and gravelling of Shylock. And what is that precious fifth act but the joyous epilogue to Shylock's sorrow? Happy, all happy, and none more so than Jessica.

How does it happen then that Shylock starting comic, falling to low comedy and sounding the depths of ridicule, has come to be tragic? For nobody takes Shylock otherwise than seriously now. We may laugh, at his "ducats and his daughter" but we do not laugh at him. We pity him or we hate him. Is this because Shakespeare as he wrote *The Merchant of Venice* had one eye on his audience, and one on posterity and the altruism of the twentieth century? Hardly. Shakespeare was no squint eyed genius, and he cared about as much for posterity *per se* as the coal barons of Pennsylvania do; not enough to have his plays published. He sold them to the theatre and there was an end. That was his publication, and the audiences his public. By the way did you ever hear a man make a speech to posterity? His hearers yawn and posterity does not last to the peroration. No, if Shakespeare thought of the matter at all, and perhaps he did, he probably thought of it in this fashion: "The best way for me to hit posterity, is to hit my auditors. They are men of like passions with myself; therefore I will give them men of like passions with us all,—like passions, though not perhaps the same passions. At the same time I will do them the honor to suppose that they will be interested, all of them or many of them, in what I have wrought with care and pains with love and hate." And so when he came to write his prescription for Shylock, it was something like this:—"Imprimis, an intellect and cunning, twice a match for anybody in the play save

dearest Portia; second, *liver* of blaspheming Jew;" third, moneys and usances; fourth, last and all the time Dr. Lopez, *Hugh of Lincoln, Gernutus; a bas des Juifs!* Lay this on with a trowel. They'll like it and I believe I do myself. Net result, mirth a plenty, but a villian who is big enough and human enough to hate." And right here it will be worth our while to revert for a moment to Marlowe's Barabas.

Marlowe wrote the Barabas of his first two acts for an audience of men. Curtain; third act; audience of prejudice and prejudice only. End of fifth act, Barabas in cauldron; bitter glee; tragic. Enter twentieth century altruism; Barabas a clown. Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* Act I, Sc. 3; enter Shylock. Audience of prejudice and men. Act IV, Sc. 1; exit Shylock. Audience still prejudice and still men. Great glee, "sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly." Enter twentieth century altruism; less prejudice and more men; Shylock still odious but still human, and therefore tragic and pitiable withal.

"*Facilis desceus Averno,*" dramatically speaking. Barabas is there. Shylock, to be sure can never reach the stars. Shakespeare has put certain smirches upon him which would make him look more like a dish pan in the spangled sky than a "patine of bright gold." But he has improved with age, and the shade of Shakespeare and the spirit of our age alike may plume themselves upon that.

BETA THETA PI SMOKER.

Beta Theta Pi gave a smoker and whist party to their alumni at their chapter house on Monday evening. Besides the active chapter among those present were: Prof. H. T. Eddy, Minnesota, '96, Prof. Wheeler, Missouri, '99, Rev. T. C. Harwood, Union, '90, Allan J. Dillingham, Union, '86, Geo. E. Pike, Union, '00, F. M. Davis, Union, '00, Chas. E. Palmer, Union, '00, Earl B. Slack, Union, '01, W. E. Van Wormer, Union, '01, Allan B. Andrew, Union, '98, Daniel F. Deyo, Union, '98, F. R. Champion, Union, '99, Frederick J. Topping, Syracuse, '97, Leonard L. Everson, Syracuse, '00, Edward M. Fuller, '01, University of Colorado.

INTER-CLASS MEET IN GYMNASIUM.

Manager Stiles of the track team has arranged for an inter-class meet in the gymnasium on March 12, 13 and 14, at 3:30 P. M. The following events will take place:

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12:

- 1—Trials, 20 yd. dash.
- 2—High hurdles.
- 3—(a) Fence Vault.
(b) Shot put.

THURSDAY, MARCH 13.

- 1—Semi-finals, 20 yd. dash.
- 2—High dive.
- 3—High kick.
- 4—Pole vault.

FRIDAY, MARCH 14.

- 1—Finals, 20 yd. dash.
- 2—High jump.
- 3—Broad jump.
Places count, first, 5; second, 3 and third, 1.

MEN AND MEASURES AT WASHINGTON.

During the present session of Congress THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, of Philadelphia, will contain bi-weekly articles on national affairs by the former Postmaster-General. Honorable Charles Emory Smith, Union, '61.

In Men and Measures at Washington Mr. Smith will discuss the great legislative and diplomatic questions of the day, explaining the news of the week and giving a clear presentation of National policies and politics. Mr. Smith's long familiarity with public affairs, his shrewd political insight and his brilliant literary style combine to make these papers of unusual interest.

The lighter side of Washington life, the amusing happenings, the current gossip and bright sayings are found in a new department, entitled A Woman's Washington. These bright letters are by the author of The Diary of a New Congressman's Wife.

AT THE LAW SCHOOL.

A challenge has been received from the Yale Law School Baseball management, for a game to be played some time in May. Although there are many good players among the Law-men, as evidenced by the number of candidates for the 'Varsity nine from the School, it is doubtful if this proposition will be accepted, as it would necessitate the complete organization of a team, and to do this for but one game is not deemed advisable.

Badger, '03, has been confined to the hospital for some time with a severe attack of typhoid. It is understood that he is now convalescent, and the junior class at a special meeting held Monday noon, voted to send the invalid a slight testimonial of the regard of his class-mates as has been done on several previous occasions in similar cases.

The '02 men who recently passed the State Bar Examinations were sworn in as Attorneys and Counsellors at the present term of the Appellate Division, Third Department.

Interest continues un-abated in the Moot-court work carried on by the juniors. The "Court of Appeals" has decided the case of Everdell vs. Hill in favor of the plaintiff-appellant, in which case Richard C. S. Drummond was attorney for plaintiff, and Norman N. Britton for defendant. In the "Appellate Division" the case of Jones vs. Spencer was argued on March 3d., by Dyer & Smith for defendant-appellant and Hotaling & Rogers for plaintiff, respondent. The decision of the court will be rendered Wednesday evening of this week.

Judge Landon began his course of lectures on "Evidence" on the 10th., to the seniors. The Dean lectured on Monday to the juniors on the Statutory Construction Act, and on Tuesday began the lectures to the same class on Torts.

Judge Tennant returned on Monday after a week's absence and was heartily received by everyone.

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Inter-class Meet. The track management have arranged for an inter-class indoor meet to be held in the gymnasium which began on Wednesday, March 12 and ends on March 14. The usual indoor events will be run off and it is hoped that by this meet any latent ability in any man in college will be discovered. The freshman class, so far, has made the largest number of entries which is a very encouraging sign.

Base-ball Subscriptions. The necessity for the immediate payment of all subscriptions for baseball does not seem to be realized by the students. The prospects for a successful season were never brighter, a good schedule of games has been arranged, an un-

usual number of candidates have appeared, the first game is on April 12, with West Point—what other argument could be used? The subscriptions should be paid and paid at once.

Commendable Position. The Senior class is to be congratulated for the position they have taken in regard to the wearing of caps and gowns. The Concordiensis realizing the importance of keeping up the custom and the improvement that could be made in it, has endeavored to arouse interest in the question by showing the advantages of retaining the custom, and to this end numerous editorials relative to this subject have appeared. Whether they were read or whether they had any influence in the decision of the class is another question, it remains that they appeared. Upon examination it will be found that the time for wearing this kind of dress for Seniors is being lengthened at all the larger institutions and is being taken up more and more by the smaller colleges.

It is a dignified uniform marking the close of many years spent in study. Worn by Seniors only, it serves to unite them more closely in the last days of their course.

TELEPHONE FOR SILLIMAN HALL.

The following committee have been appointed to find out definitely regarding the cost of putting a telephone in Silliman Hall for the use of the students. The committee is composed of W. S. Yates, '02, chairman, L. W. Bloch, '02, and N. N. Gould, '03.

CAPS AND GOWNS FOR SENIORS.

The Senior class at a meeting held on Monday morning decided to wear caps and gowns after May 1st through Commencement week. The Cap and gown Committee have made arrangements with Cotrell & Leonard of Albany to furnish them and all Seniors wishing cap and gown should see the committee as soon as possible. The cost will be \$6.25.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD AT UNION COLLEGE.

[Extracts from his Autobiography, published in 1891, and from the 'Memoir' by George E. Baker, prefixed to his Works, published in 1853.]

The eventful career of Union's Greatest Alumnus is replete with concern to Americans, irrespect of political creed, and especially should the incidents of the years 1816 to 1820—when he was a student, interest Union students of to-day. With this hope, these quotations are made.

"At Schenectady I alighted on the banks of the Mohawk River, then navigated with "bateaux." I climbed the College Hill with a reluctant and embarrassed step, to offer myself for an examination at which I feared I might not pass. I called at the office of the registrar, Mr. Holland, and by him was immediately introduced into the presence of the Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. The college catalogue, which I had carefully read, described him as the Rev. Thomas McCauley, Doctor of Divinity and Doctor of Laws. I wondered at my presumption in coming into so high a presence. The professor inquired which of the classes I supposed myself prepared to enter. I summoned boldness to answer that I had studied for examination to enter the junior class. He immediately put me through a series of questions for half an hour, in several preparatory class books, and pronounced me more than qualified. He then asked my age, and on receiving the answer "fifteen", he replied that my studies had carried me beyond my years; the laws of the college making sixteen the age for entering the junior class. I did not regret the decision. Life at college seemed very attractive. and my previous excess of preparation would make my studies easier. Long before night, my "chum" was chosen, my room supplied with the cheap furniture which the college regulations required, as I sat down to meditate on the dignity of my new situation. I was matriculated as sophomore; and these two large words signified, for me, a great deal, because I had not the least idea of the meaning of either."

"Union College was now, in 1816, at, or near the height of its prosperity. The President, Dr. Nott, ranked with the most popular preachers of the day; while his great political talents secured him the patronage of all the public men in the State. The discipline of the college was based on the soundest and wisest principles. There was an absence of everything inquisitorial or suspicious; there were no courts or impeachments; every young man had his appointed studies, recitations and attendance at prayers; and a demeanor was required which should not disturb the quiet or order of the institution. If he failed or offended, he was privately called into the presence of the president or professor, remonstrated with, and admonished that repeated failure would be made known to his parents for their consideration, while habitual insubordination would be visited with dismissal. I think I know of no institution where a manlier spirit prevailed among the undergraduates than that which distinguished the pupils of Dr. Nott.

"I cannot speak so highly of the system of instruction. There was a daily appointment of three tasks, in as many different studies, which the pupils were required, unaided, to master in their rooms, the young, the dull, and the backward, equally with the most mature and the most astute. The pupil understood that he performed his whole duty when he recited these daily lessons without failure. With most of us the memory was doubtless the faculty chiefly exercised; and where so much was committed mechanically to memory, much was forgotten as soon as learned. It was a consequence of the method of instruction that every study was not a continuous one, but consisted of fragmentary tasks, while no one volume or author was ever completed."

"Finding, in my Latin author, passages too obscure to be solved unaided, I went freely, though meekly, to the tutor, and obtained his assistance during the study hours. Soon afterward the leading members of the class, with the support of the rest, determined to oblige the accomplished tutor to give them shorter lessons and more frequent holidays. They attempted to effect this by throwing a safœtida on the heated

stove, and, when this proceeding failed, one, bolder than all the rest, standing behind the tutor, pulled him by the hair. Of course he found out the offenders, and of course they were punished. The whole class, suspected an informer; and who could the informer be but myself, who excelled them all in the recitations, who refused to go into the general meeting and who was seen daily going to and from the tutor's room upon some errand unexplained? This, I think, was my first experience of partisan excitement. I need not say that I never afterward offended my classmates by seeking to obtain special instructions or aid from my teacher."

On January 1, 1819, Seward, who was then a senior and had become involved in debts to "the accomplished tailors of Schenectady," left college to teach in the South, spending six months in Georgia. He subsequently returned to college and graduated the next year.

"A new state of things had occurred during the year of my absence from the college. Previously to that event, the students from the North and the South mingled promiscuously and mingled harmoniously together. Union College during that year received a large accession of "Southerners." Previous to their coming, the students were divided between the two literary societies, the one "the Philomathean," the other "the Adelpic," which were nearly coeval with the college itself. Of these, the Philomathean was the larger and the more popular, as it claimed to be, by a year or two, the more ancient. I belonged to the Adelpic, which, at the time, consoled itself for its inferiority of numbers by pretensions to superior

scholarship. The Southerners, on their arrival at the college, had joined the Philomathean, but soon afterward had complained of oppression, seceded and organized a third society, under the name of the "Delphian Institute."

"The division of the Philomathean Society, not unnaturally agitated the Adelpic, leading members of which anticipated an increase of their own strength from the diminution of the numbers and prestige of their great rival, the Philomathean. The agitation drew into discussion the relative merits of Southern and Northern Society. It seemed to be believed by both parties that the opinions I should express, after having had a six months' experience in the South would carry weight. The Philomatheans claimed my sympathy on the ground of the character which I had established for independence. The Adelpic sympathizers with the seceders claimed my adhesion on the ground of loyalty to the institution to which I belonged, and which had crowned me with all its little honors. Thus at an early date, *before my educational course was ended*, I stood upon the *threshold of national politics*. I promptly decided that the Southern secession was unjustifiable and disloyal to the institution, while I made due acknowledgments of the hospitable and chivalrous character of the South."

"My *chef d'oeuvre* in the Literary Society was an essay in which I demonstrated that the Erie Canal was an impossibility, and that, even if it should be successfully constructed, it would financially ruin the State. On the other hand, the subject of my commencement oration was, "The Integrity of the American Union."

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"If I were required now to say from what part of my college education I derived the greatest advantage, I should say, the exercises of the Adelpic Society."

"The college career of young Seward," observes his biographer, "as related by his contemporaries, gave brilliant indication of the rare qualities for which he has become distinguished. The traits of the future legislator and statesman were foreshadowed in the character of the modest youth during his period of academic retirement. Even then he displayed great originality of conception—the sturdy independence of purpose—the firm adherence to his convictions of right—the intrepid assertion of high moral principles—the careful examination of a cause before appearing in its defence—the sympathy with the weak and oppressed—and the intellectual vigilance and assiduity in the pursuit of the truth, which have formed such conspicuous and admirable features in his public career."

W. H. A., '02.

CHI PSI CONVENTION.

To be held with the Union Chapter on
May 14, 15 and 16.

The sixty-first annual convention of the Chi Psi fraternity will be held in this city, May 14th, 15th and 16th, in the new lodge of the local chapter, which is now nearing completion. Delegates from 18 Alphas will attend, representing a number of the Eastern colleges, including Williams, Amherst, Cornell, Hamilton, Rutgers, Stevens Institution of Technology, Lehigh, in the middle west, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Chicago, and in the far west, Leland Stanford and California universities. The delegates and visitors will be tendered a smoker in the lodge on Wednesday evening and a banquet in the Ten Eyck, in Albany, on Friday evening. The remaining three days will be devoted to the transaction of fraternity business.

TRACK PROSPECTS.

The prospects for a first class track team this year cannot be said to be the brightest. The loss of Weed, Kline, Stack and Langlois will make the team materially weaker than it was last

year as far as the three upper classes are concerned. There seems to be, however, some promising material in the freshman class which may show up well in time. As no inter-class meet was held last fall, nothing definite is known as to just what this material is worth.

The only meet that is definitely scheduled as yet is the meet with New York University. The meet at Rochester, Decoration day, of course was cancelled by Union's withdrawal from the league.

An inter-class meet is being held this week to awaken interest in track athletics, and both captain and manager are doing all that they can to form a good team. Whether they do or not rests largely with the student body, as they must receive something more than the half-hearted support which has hitherto been accorded to track athletics.

Among those who will try for the team are: in the jumps, Griffith, Rutledge, Olmsted and Raymond; pole vault, Raymond, and Arms; weights, Finegan, Patton and Becker; long and middle distance runs, Hawkes, Finegan, Hoadley, Parker, Benning, Becker and Kluge; hurdles, Griffith, Olmsted, King and Raymond; sprints, Griswold, Arms and Stevens.

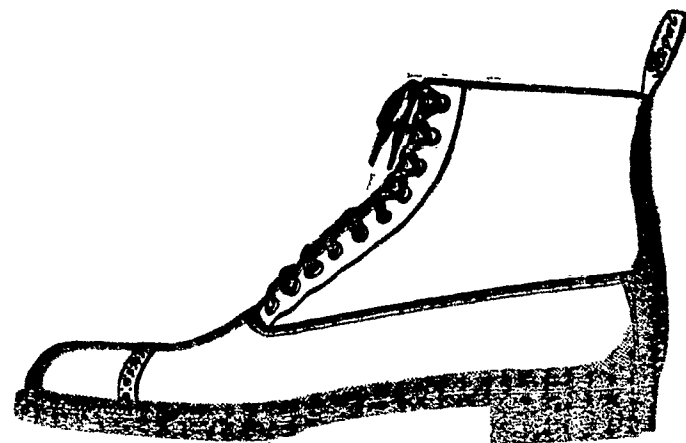
COLLEGE TALK.

The annual dance of the Theta Sigma society of the Union Classical institute will take place Friday evening, April 4th Yates' Boat House.

The following sophomores have registered for assistant manager of the base ball team: E. T. Rulison, H. S. Olmsted and J. T. Putnam.


The senior class in sociology were entertained by the University Club of Schenectady on the evening of March 8 at the invitation of Dr. F. R. Jones.

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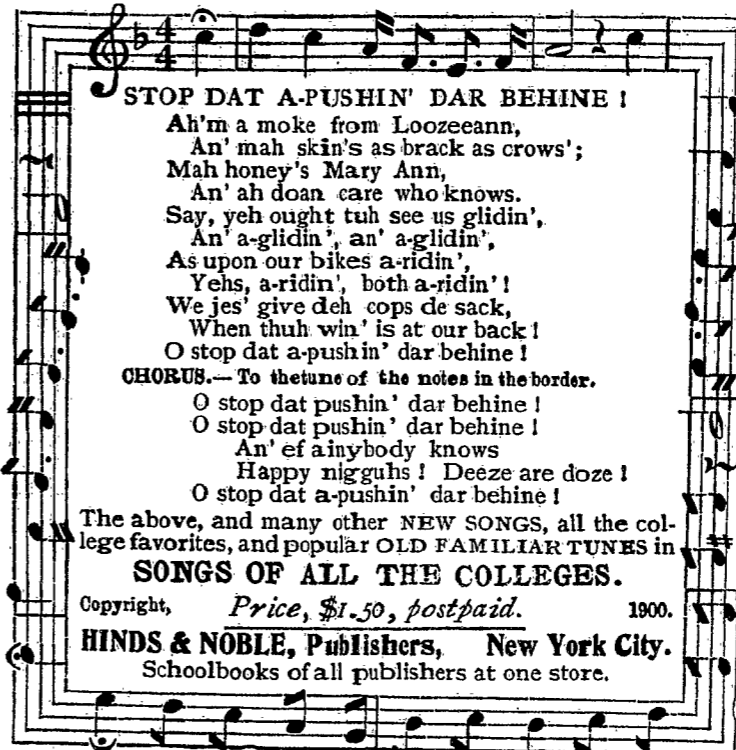
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As upon our bikes a-ridin',
Yehs, a-ridin', both a-ridin'!
We jes' give deh cops de sack,
When thuh win' is at our back!
O stop dat a-pushin' dar behine!

CHORUS.— To the tune of the notes in the border.
O stop dat pushin' dar behine!
O stop dat pushin' dar behine!
An' ef anybody knows
Happy niggus! Deeze are doze!
O stop dat a-pushin' dar behine!

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*No. 14, Oneida Accommodation	9:37 a m
*No. 16, N. Y. & N. E. Express	10:45 a m
*No. 56, Accommodation	12:07 p m
No. 2, Day Express	1:33 p m
*No. 22, N. Y. & Chicago Limited	2:35 p m
No. 62, Accommodation	3:59 p m
*No. 14, Eastern Express	4:14 p m
*No. 18, West Shore	5:40 p m
*No. 66, Accommodation	5:59 p m
No. 72, Accommodation	7:10 p m
*No. 74, Accommodation	9:48 p m
*No. 28, N. Y. & Boston Express	11:25 p m
*No. 32, Fast Mail	11:50 p m

k stops to land passengers from Chicago and points west and to take on passengers for New York and Boston.
a carries sleeping car passengers only for Boston.

Going West.

No. 29, Buffalo Special	12:11 a m
*No. 37, Pacific Express	2:27 a m
No. 41, Accommodation	7:38 a m
*No. 43, Buffalo Local	8:46 a m
*No. 63, Accommodation	9:53 a m
No. 65, Accommodation	11:47 a m
No. 45, Syracuse Express	2:00 p m
*No. 3, Fast Mail	12:30 p m
No. 7, Day Express	3:15 p m
*No. 47, N. Y. & Syracuse Accommodation	5:20 p m
*No. 21, N. Y. & Chicago Express	6:15 p m
*No. 17, N. Y. & Detroit Special	8:20 p m
*No. 67, Oneida Express	8:27 p m
*No. 23, Western Express	10:32 p m
*No. 71, Accommodation	11:02 p m

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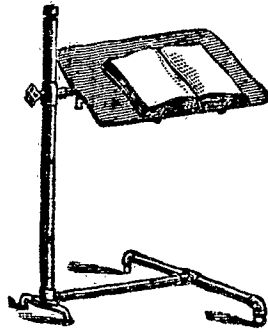
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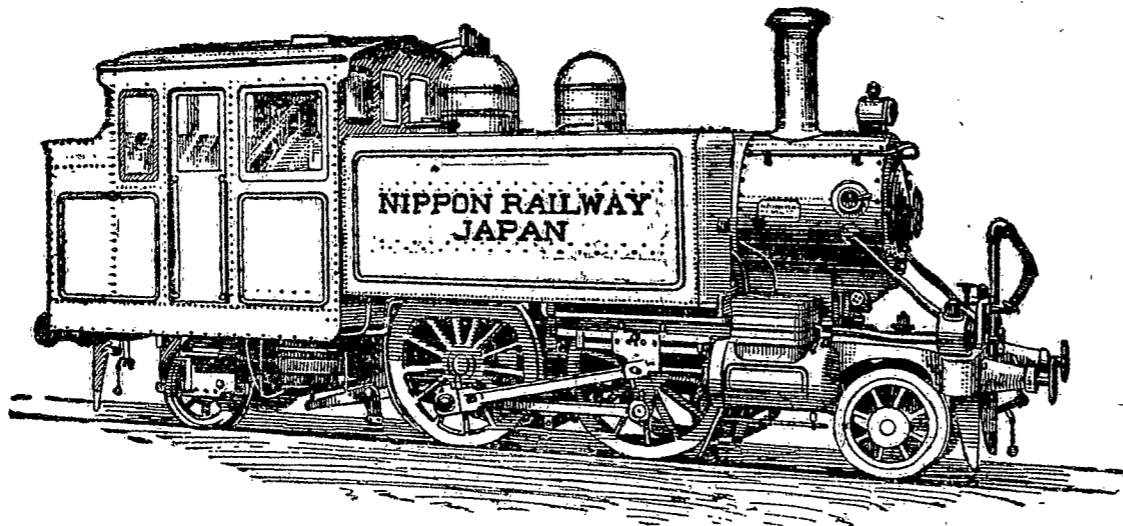
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