The conflict watched. No faint dejected sigh
Escaped his list'ning ear. No word of praise
Deserved was left unsaid. No race is long
With such a smile to cheer the fainting heart;
Naught but his earnest words could prove so strong
To cause the lingering step again to start.
And friendly voices, stirred by friendly souls,
E'er had a word of sympathy to speak,—
When hearts grew faint, when eyes lost sight of goals,
When rugged paths made weary bodies weak.
Successes won were stones on which to rise
To nobler themes, to grander, loftier heights;
While conflicts lost e'en helped to win the prize
By urging on the limbs to swifter flights.
Though lined with thorns, and far o'er rugged steeps
Their devious pathway led, and seemed to lose
Its winding way in ever-sinking deeps,
Till eyes could scarce discern which way to choose;
Yet high above their course there shined a light
So clear and bright that demon's blackest cloud
Could never bring the semblance of a night,
Nor dark forebodings ever be allowed,—
If eyes made blind by watching depths below
Could rise to view this gracious beacon flame,
Could but reflect its all pervading glow,
And show in blazing words its lofty name.
One's duty known, with conscience bright and true,
And courage, staunch, of deep conviction born,
With heaven's smile to warm one's nature through,
And heart of flesh one's actions to adorn;
All these combine to feed a flame by far
More bright than that on Ætna's burning peak;
And, when thus formed, becomes a lasting star,
To lead the travelers toward the goal they seek.

The exercises closed with the oration by
Mr. H. A. Waterman, after which the guests of
the class inspected the exhibits and laborato-
ries of the Institute, and finished the after-
noon with a dance in the Engineering Building.

THE ORATION.

It is the prevailing impression that city governments
generally are in a deplorable condition. It is quite
evident why such an opinion should exist. In the
city of Philadelphia there has recently been com-
pleted a large reservoir, built by contractors who are a part of the political machine which controls the
city. One million five hundred thousand dollars have been expended; yet this basin will not hold water,
and the contractors dare not attempt to fill it, because
the inside embankment, instead of being built of clay,
as the specifications require, was built of a mixture of
clay and sand; and the city of Philadelphia is called
upon to pay two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in
addition to the million and a half already expended, in
order to make this reservoir fit for the purpose for
which it was intended.

But this is but one illustration of the enormous cor-
ruption which exists in hundreds of our cities to-day.
The public well knows what the recent investigations
into the administration of the city of New York have
brought forth; and while many will say that these
things are true of New York, but are not true of any
other place, yet there is a large number who firmly
believe that these things are true of New York to an
extraordinary extent, simply because New York is the
largest city in the country and offers the greatest prizes
to boodlers, and that in the smaller cities, or in nearly
to all the other cities, we should find something of the
same kind if an investigation should be made.

There are two reasons in general why the govern-
ment of great cities in this country is defective. In
the first place, the problem, until very recently, has
been one of comparative unimportance. In the early
days, when the cities began to grow, but little atten-
tion was paid to municipal affairs. It is true we had
cities of very considerable size even before the close of
the last century; yet they did not occupy that place
in the general political system of the country which
the great cities do to-day. The problem at that time