

## [Introduction]

L. Wood: This is a good reporting job. Whether we can use it or not depends on the flexibility of the collection. [Walden?]: Is this the conversation you actually overheard? Did you omit anything? Most sentences seem uniformly short, [sort of stop at the same point, all of which indicates?] ignorance on the part of the debaters. Or is this a [?] sketch [?] made up by yourself [???] a conversation in Union Square. [???] dialed [?] good English.

Wayne Walden

Dec. 20, 1938

[?]: Conversation In a Park—Union Square.

“Walden: Is this the conversation you actually overheard? Did you omit anything? Most sentences seem uniformly short, sort of stop at the same point, all of which indicates ignorance on the part of the debaters. Or is this a satirical sketch mainly made up by yourself and based on a conversation in Union Square? Their lingo is sometimes dialect, sometimes good English.”

In answer to this, dealing with it in the order asked, I may say that it fairly represents the type of argument common enough in Union Square about ten years ago. It [is?] essentially what I was able to overhear and to record from listening in on a number of such never ending debates.

Probably certain parts were omitted, profanity, and what I may have then thought irrelevant, but on the whole the arguments were considerably of this nature. In these heated verbal combats no speaker is suffered long enough to more than indicate what he wished to say before being interrupted by another. Constant interruption was a characteristic of the discussions, the leading lights being familiar with the points of the

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other, but mainly desirous of putting over his own. I have read this, upon a few occasions, to gatherings, quite accustomed to hearing the arguments themselves, and always the response was appreciative of my having given as fairly literal treatment of the actual argument as might be achieved. Granting that the sketch may be easily enough construed as an attempt to satirize the arguments, I had no such intention when it was written, nor does such an intention seem evident to those who have read the sketch. My aim was not to point out the ignorance of [????] that of which they seemingly are so [?????] humour of such discussions [??????] more than a form of [??????] [?] whole the English [?????] [??????????] flights are attempted 2 [??]

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[?????????]. Drunks, lit up with Bowery booze, stagger in and out the midst of the throng, pugnaciously demanding "What the hell's going on here." Some more amicable, believing themselves at a session of the Salvation Army, are with difficulty prevented from giving a testimonial of their past wickedness and present ecstasy in being saved.

Place - Union Square, or [Bughouse] Babble Park as it is referred to in the vernacular of its frequenters. While this particular square is in New York City the scene and conversation, with slight variations has as its theatre numerous parks in many cities throughout the United States.

Time - Today, and conjecturally tomorrow.