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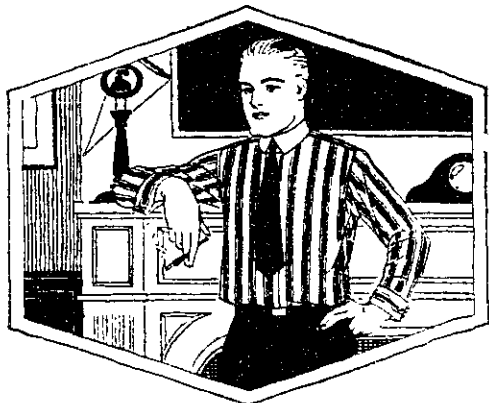
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STEPHEN LEACOCK'S IDEA OF A COLLEGE

Canadian Humorist Explains
How He Would Establish An
Institution of Higher Learning

SMOKING ROOM FIRST

(Stephen Leacock in The Boston Transcript)

When I was a student at the University of Toronto thirty years ago, I lived, from start to finish, in seventeen different boarding houses. As far as I am aware these houses have not, or not yet, been marked with tablets. But they are still to be found in the vicinity of McCaul and Darcy, and St. Patrick streets. Any one who doubts the truth of what I have to say may go and look at them. I was not alone in the nomadic life that I led. There were hundreds of us drifting about in this fashion from one melancholy habitation to another. We lived, as a rule, two or three in a house, sometimes alone. We dined in the basement. We always had beef, done up in some way after it was dead, and there were always soda biscuits on the table. They used to have a brand of soda biscuits in those days in the Toronto boarding houses that I have not seen since. They were better than dog biscuits but not so much snap. My contemporaries will all remember them. A great many of the leading barristers and professional men of Toronto were fed on them.

No Common Reading Rooms

In the life we led we had practically no opportunities for association on a large scale, no common rooms, no reading rooms, nothing. We never saw the magazines—personally I didn't even know the names of them. The only interchange of ideas we ever got was by going over to the Caer Howell Hotel on University avenue and interchanging them there. I mention these melancholy details not for their own sake, but merely to emphasize the point that when I speak of students' dormitories, and the larger life which they offer, I speak of what I know.

If we had had at Toronto, when I was a student, the kind of dormitories and dormitory life that they have at Harvard, I don't think I would ever have graduated. I'd have been there still.

Meaning Not Realized

The trouble is that the universities on our continent are only just waking up to the idea of what a university should mean. They were, very largely, instituted and organized with the idea that a university was a place where young men were sent to absorb the contents of books and to listen to lectures in the classrooms. The student was pictured as a pallid creature, burning what was called the "midnight oil," his face bent over his desk. If you wanted to do something for him you gave him a book; if you wanted to do something really large on his behalf you gave him a whole basketful of them. If you wanted to go still further and be a real benefactor to the college at large, you endowed a competitive scholarship and set two or more pallid students working themselves to death to get it.

Textbook But a Part of Life

That, as I see it, was about the idea and theory of the Canadian Universities as they used to be. In the course of time and through the plain teaching of circumstances, we have been getting away from that idea. We are beginning to see that the text book and the class room are but a part of the student's life. If they are taken by themselves in undiluted doses, they probably do more harm than good. They not only injure the student's health but they impair his mind. True education cannot be achieved after this fashion, by shoveling in information. The most that this can ever give is erudition and pedantry, never capacity and genuine acquirement. The typical product of it is the college pedant possessed of a stomach-full of fact but with a

TAKE ME AWAY ON A SPECIAL TRAIN

Signing up for the New York Special train is not as rapid as was hoped. At present there are not enough men on the list in the main lobby to commandeer a special train for Technology at one o'clock on Monday, Dec. 20. Unless over one hundred and twenty-five men sign up before five o'clock Wednesday, the plan will be dropped.

If there are not enough men for a whole train, the committee will probably endeavor to secure a special car on the Knickerbocker for that date. An effort will be made to have the tickets for sale at the Institute, but if not the number of the car will be posted, and men may secure their tickets from the ticket agent at South Station. A definite announcement will appear in THE TECH on Friday.

mind the size of a peanut and the outlook of a child.

The real process of education consists (as the derivation of the word implies) in bringing out of the mind the inborn capacity that is in it. I think that Horace said something of this sort before. But there is no harm in saying it over again.

Social Life Necessary

Since the melancholy days of which I speak, I have had the experience of nearly a quarter of a century of post-graduate work under university teaching. It is a noble profession, and, with the continued aid of the governors of McGill University, I hope to have another quarter of a century of it at least before I hang up my mortar board and sink into the arms of the trustees of the Carnegie Pension Fund. But as a college teacher I have long since realized that the most that the teacher, as such, can do for the student is a very limited matter. The real thing for the student is the life and environment that surrounds him. All that he really learns he learns, in a sense, by the active operation of his own intellect and not as the passive recipient of lectures. And for this active operation what he needs most is the continued and intimate contact with his fellows. Students must live together and eat together, talk and smoke together. Experience shows that that is how their minds really grow. And they must live together in a rational and comfortable way. They must eat in a big dining room or hall, with oak beams across the ceiling, and the stained glass in the windows and with a shield or tablet here and there upon the wall, to remind them between times of the men who went before them and left a name worthy of the memory of the college. If a student is to get from his college what it ought to give him, a college dormitory with the life in common that it brings, is his absolute right. A university that fails to give it to him is cheating him.

Secure Text Books Last

If I were founding a university—and I say it with all the seriousness of which I am capable, I would found first a smoking room; then when I had a little more money in hand I would found a dormitory; then after that, or more properly with that, a decent reading room and a library. After that, if I still had money over that I couldn't use, I would hire a professor and get some text books.

We are conducting a campaign—just now to raise or lift \$5,000,000 for McGill University. I have a notion that we are going to get it. And it is the duty of those of us who are in the university to show our generous friends outside what it is that we mean to do with it when we have it.

To my mind the greatest of all our needs is the building of the college dormitories to supply to our students a wider college life than we can give them now. There is no nobler object of benefaction than this. There is no better way to perpetuate an honored name or to cherish the memory of one who is lost than that the name and memory should be inscribed, cut deep in stone over the gateway of a college dormitory at McGill.

AM. CHEM. SOC. MEMBERSHIP
OPEN TO UNDERGRADUATES

Students in course Y and course X may be interested in an announcement made by the secretary of the American Chemical Society that bona fide matriculated students of chemistry may be allowed to become members of the Society, and to receive one journal at the rate of \$6 a year, or the three journals with a discount of 1-3 off of the regular rate of \$15, this rate to be discontinued January 1 following their departure from college.

The journals which members receive are the Journal of the American Chemical Society, Chemical Abstracts, and the Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry.

SOPHOMORE BANQUET TICKETS SOLD TODAY

(Continued from Page 1)

ing the new "23 Victory Song" by Penneyacker to the catchy tune of "Oh By Jingo," will form a complete and varied program. Frank Gage's orchestra will furnish music during the progress of the dinner, and the Soph Band will be heard from, from time to time in the course of the evening.

DECIDE ON MEN FOR CAST OF TECH SHOW

(Continued from page 1)

Middlefield, H. E. Whittaker, T. H. Joyce. The publicity department has also made its first cut and the men remaining in the contest are:—W. P. Bubank, D. B. Jennings, A. P. Kellogg, and W. A. McCartney all of the freshman class. At the same time, the business department announces that V. C. Ambler, W. C. Barton, G. R. McPhee, R. M. Simonds, and W. L. Thompson are to be retained from among the freshmen and that W. K. Coolidge, G. F. Cook, N. G. Hughes, W. D. Scofield, and R. E. Sherbrook of the Sophomore class will remain with the organization.

May Play in Springfield

The co-eds have progressed so rapidly with the costumes that they expect to have them ready for the first fitting on Wednesday, December 15. The costumes will undoubtedly be finished by the beginning of the second term. Men who are thinking of designing scenery for the show may obtain this afternoon in the show office, the specifications of the required scenery. The scenery plays a big part in all the productions of the Tech Show and it is required quite a fact that the Institute is one of the few places in the world where the very scenery is designed by home talent. The management is making every possible effort to make arrangements to stop over at Springfield and at Worcester with the production so that the people of those cities may have a chance to view the works of the undergraduate activities of the members of the Institute. If this is accomplished and the "Purple Dragon" is played before people in other places than Boston and surroundings as well as Northampton, it will be a new policy on the part of the management.

Send Ticket Applications

Applications for tickets will be mailed to every student but the management will assume no responsibility in failure of their delivery. The file on student addresses is kept in the Show office and men are requested to make any corrections necessary so that the mail will go to the correct address.



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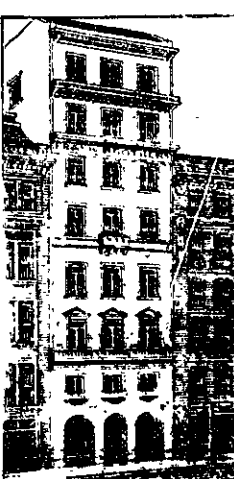
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