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J. P. Ramsey Jr. '25

A FRESHMAN ACTIVITY

THE new Institute publication, the Freshman Gray Book, has finally appeared after many delays and postponements. Not every news organ is forced to go thru the peculiar dilemma through which the Gray Book had to make its ways before it was to come to the public eye. All such organs have their troubles quite naturally, but ordinarily these are of a somewhat different character.

Originally intended to furnish a means by which freshmen would become more quickly acquainted with each other, the Gray Book has come out at too late a date to achieve the end for which it was created. Previous to its origination the need had been widely felt for some such an organ to remove some of the objections to holding the elections for freshman class officers so soon after the entrance of the freshman class. Even after a half term at Technology the majority of friendships formed among the freshmen have always been between men in the same sections. It was the Gray Book's chief purpose to remove this impracticality of early elections.

The blame for the late appearance of the Gray Book cannot be justly placed on anyone in particular, unless, perhaps, it were the freshmen themselves. At the beginning of the first term it was announced that the new publication would be gotten out by freshmen under the supervision of Technique. Whether this fact was not emphasized sufficiently, or whether the opportunities offered were not of a lurid enough nature to attract the freshmen, very few turned out, and the bulk of the work of preparing the book fell upon the men on the Technique staff who had enough work to do for their own publication.

IT is not to be inferred that this first issue of the Gray Book is of no use. Quite the contrary, for the records of men prior to their admission to Technology have been little known in the past, and their pictures will still form the basis for recognition and identification with their names. So long as the Gray Book is to continue in existence, however, and if it is to be of maximum value to the students, more especially the freshmen, it is imperative that it make its appearance before freshman elections.

The Gray Book should be made a permanent institution and added to the ever-growing list of Technology activities. The experiences of last fall must not bear repetition. Technique started the idea, and its staff is indeed responsible for the fact that the Gray Book ever appeared this year. The nature of the freshman year book is such that out of sheer logic it should be supervised by Technique men. At the same time, more freshmen would go out for the Gray Book if they were impressed with the fact that it was a separate activity, and were a definite form of organization worked out so that eventually the publication would be run by a Managing Board of upperclassmen picked from the men who go out for it while freshmen.

THE TECHNOLOGY SWEAT BOX

A GREAT deal has been said, written, and thought on Technology's status in relation to extra-curriculum activities. The most widely accepted belief was aptly pointed out by President Stratton at the Alumni Banquet last Saturday night when he emphasized the fact that Tech is not "just a sweat box," and indicated the essential and real advantages that are open to those who are anxious to benefit from them.

It is apparently true that a great many men derive their utmost satisfaction from any casual conversation that enables them to emphasize only the difficulty that they experience here as students. That is an excellent method of arousing sympathy with one unfamiliar with the real Technology, and it is certain to provoke unjustified admiration for the person engaged in such a delineation. It is one method of taking refuge from a difficulty, and of all it is the most despicable. It is the indication of the narrowness of a man who sees only that part of student life which is manifested within the confines of a classroom.

We need men who see over and beyond the limiting walls, men who can go forth and challenge the sweat shop conception which is so universally evident in the minds of the public, and eliminates this attitude with a conviction based not on the difficulties, but on the glories of Technology.

The Blasfield Mural As A Work of Art

By Prof. H. L. SEAVER

Before Mr. Blasfield's decoration, even if it were complete, the natural question: "How do you like it?" is not the wisest, because so many other questions should be answered first. Such a vast panel represents months and months of the most highly skilled effort spent on repeated experiments in the color scheme and countless careful studies of individual figures. Before such a painting how impertinent to grunt an unmediated indifference or applause between gulps of luncheon. The legitimate questions may be asked years hence: "Do you recall that at this or that dance the canvas shed a glory of color over a bewitchingly memorable evening? that at this or that banquet or graduation or class day those acclaiming figures set a noble decoration adding richness to the ceremony; that the undefined background of your memories of M. I. T. is touched with something of grace or elegance which it owes to the Walker mural?" To the request of THE TECH, therefore, I can respond only with some first impressions.

These must be provisional because the work is clearly not final. The rest of the decoration of the hall is baldly austere, with bold and severe contrasts of brick red and sand color: into this the new panel scarcely fits, it is so sumptuously rich. It has a sort of bloom, with range of colors through indigo and violet, to which there is no sort of response elsewhere in the hall. Side panels over the doors are, I understand, planned, to extend the richer color scheme; and decorative borders may harmonize the painting better with its surroundings. The tall cedars in

tubs at present help much toward a frame; the bordering pillars may be retreated to serve the same purpose. The middle strip of canvas is perceptibly lighter than both sides,—not apparently because of cross lighting but because executed separately. Such harmonizing will doubtless be effected as the whole decoration grows to completion. Time, too, mellow paintings in the atmosphere of rooms in actual use, especially if there is frequent smoking. The present walls give a stony texture to the room, and the panel is more tapestry-like, especially by artificial light; the discrepancy may be much reduced by redecorating.

The intellectual import of the panel is, doubtless by intent, subdued to a minimum. There is perhaps no historic scene or episode of general appropriateness to the place, even if one wanted the story-telling type of decoration. No use is made even symbolically of actual figures in the story of science: every figure introduced is allegoric. The subject is academic,—if I may use a word which in my day meant no abuse, but merely that one preferred to adjust himself to a reverent tradition rather than to ignore or defy it. The central personage is the alma mater of all education, not specifically of scientific. Experimental study is indeed thronged together with humanistic; and among the acclaiming figures many have haloed names of the sciences, but no attributes or activities specialize these in any respect. The purpose of the panel is clearly to use figures decoratively, with no more ref-

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COMMUNICATION

To the Editor:

I have read your two valuable editorials on Political Clubs at Technology, and would like to venture some reflections concerning them.

What you suggest in brief is that students join one of the parties so that they "may become real factors in political activities during their more mature years." You go on to state that the opportunity should be appreciated by those capable of formulating independent opinions and "desirous of cultivating political interests under extremely favorable conditions."

I hope I may be forgiven, if I go on to make a prophecy regarding the outcome of this program. I see men joining the parties here, I see rousing speeches, enrollment campaigns, perhaps communications to your papers, lusty cheers and enthusiasm for "our gang" as against "your gang" (whatever they may be), an intense rivalry (similar to a long awaited football rivalry), occasional well-bred mud-slinging, a heated pre-election period and then the election and aftermath, at which the victorious will swell with pride that they picked the winner, will mentally give some "rah rahs for our gang" and get back to studying, as ignorant of real political issues as when they joined the "gang."

By this lengthy picture I mean to convey for your consideration that real politics involve primarily a knowledge and understanding of issues, an intelligent consideration of them from the point of view that the individual considers best, and then an association with that which tends to promote those issues. We have enough practical politics, in which issues are clouded to make the rivalry appeal stronger, or conversely in which issues are exaggerated to make the rivalry keener. A normal person will inevitably drift into that type of politics in his maturer years. Then doesn't it strike you that during his younger years when his mind is freer from bias that he should make an honest attempt to understand politics from the point of view of ultimate realities, viz., policies and issues?

If he will get into one of the two parties and subconsciously substitute rivalry for reality, why push the evil day ahead by urging the association now? Why not urge the formation of clubs to consider issues, the issues of the big parties, from the point of view of non-partisan. Why not try if possible to cultivate the formulation of an independent opinion, which you speak of, by urging conditions that will make for it?

DAVID LASSER '24.



There are certain pleasures that come from being on THE TECH. The Lounge experienced one of them the other day. It gave him a plausible excuse to drop into the President's office. The office did not give even a breath of the coldness of the average Technology rooms. In fact the whole suite radiated a warmth and quietness that centered about the dignified gentleman who greeted the Lounge from behind his large flat top desk in the middle of the room. A small grate to the President's right spread the warmth and dull glow of burning coals over the room. The Lounge might easily have imagined himself being ushered into the study of the master of one of those massive stone dwellings of Fifth Avenue.

But there is a first line defence to this office. Your fate lies in the hands of a middle-aged lady, who takes your name, business, and motives down in an outer office. She quietly treads into the inner sanctuary and leaves you in a grim silence while you have mental nightmares of the description of "just another of those long haired students that wishes to see you" she is giving to the President. You imagine the President looking up with rage and annoyance in his eye and a "Well tell him I'm busy" statement on his tongue. Imagine your surprise when suddenly the lady is again in front of you and motions toward an open door, murmuring "Dr. Stratton will see you."

But of course you need not have had all those worries if you had ever met the President before. He greets you with cordiality and interest, and though he must keep that slight reserve that his position warrants, you are made to feel in no way that you are intruding. The President's desk is generally clear, there are none of those loose papers and letters around to give the atmosphere of great business. But he is not fooled. The Lounge heard Dr. Stratton tell the Alumni last Saturday night that he had not accomplished nearly what he had hoped to,

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Play Directory

COLONIAL: "Sancho Panza," Otis Skinner
COPLEY: "Windows," Galsworthy on infanticide.
HOLLIS: "The 1st Year," Funny conjugal misadventure of young Main Streeters.
PLYMOUTH: "Whispering Wires," Thrilling mystery.
ST. JAMES: "The Eleventh Commandment," Boston Stock Co. in Melodrama.
SELWYN: "Sweet Lavender," English company in Pinero revival.
SHUBERT: "A Perfect Lady," Will be a hit of the season.
TREMONT: "Adrienne," New musical comedy.
WILBUR: "Up She Goes," Musical comedy, book by Frank Craven.

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