

# Penn State Collegian

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### A TALE OF TWO FRESHMEN

This is a simple tale of two freshmen who matriculated at Penn State, each with a fate seemingly predestined.

Sinclair Smooth, product of the metropolitan district, polished, well-mannered, perfectly groomed, an adept gentleman but a miserably scholar, arrived ceremoniously, greeted by a horde of fraternity salesmen. His hand was pressed with fraternal vigor, his back was patted fondly in more or less superficial affection; he was hauled to a room conveniently selected for him by the committee on advanced entertainment.

John Plain, product of the district more or less rural, arrived unheralded and unstrung, greeted by none other than publications solicitors. Clothed simply, and none too elegantly, mannered and groomed just as simply, he of the honest heart and earnest will, the Plain youth felt only the friendliness of the warm sun and of the democratic atmosphere. He found his own room.

The Smooth scion was given a "heavy rush," petted and pampered, promised and pledged. The Plain boy was practically unnoticed. Later, an acquaintance from his locality might have had what his fraternity brothers thought the temerity to "bring the boy around" for more or less obligatory motives. Of course, the brothers flocked about him for the usual "pleased t' meetcha," but he was never considered a serious prospect by the connoisseurs of proper apparel. Probably he was even treated with incivility, totally ignored and given a meek—and final—send-off. Gladly.

Here, the story should end and would end if this were a literary column, but there is a vague moral which is hardly tangible, and an ironical, confused situation which is not easily repaired.

Sinclair Smooth, some would contend, was the only man of the two who could be comfortably elected into the brotherhood. He was suave, sophisticated, learned. Perhaps an athlete, for purposes of recommendation. And John Plain was a viper, a social rat, an unruly hick, with nothing to offer, nothing at all but a great heart, a will to learn and work and serve.

Yet, why should the Smooth lad, with all his "savon laire," with all his grooming, need the aid of a fraternity as much as John Plain, the raw product of humanity? Why should all the polish be applied to the surfaces already smooth and the rough, uneven spots left untouched? Surely, the fraternities must select the best of the student crop, but they should not overlook the opportunity of grooming, nurturing, supporting a promising but crude prospect like John Plain.

And they don't. For in time, the Plain youth has learned a lesson helping himself. Gradually, he approaches the stratum of the Smooth scion. He has made something of himself in an extra-curricular way, but of course, that makes no difference to the Greek gods, none whatever. They want John Plain for himself alone. They should have pledged him sooner.

All fraternities make mistakes.

### ARE COLLEGE STICKERS DESIRABLE?

With the influx of students into the College during the past week a large number of Penn State stickers and insignia have appeared on baggage, automobiles and slickers. It should be well known that Penn State's code of customs states that "students shall not paste or paint stickers or seals, bearing College insignia, on baggage or on the backs of slickers or coats." It seems that many do not know of this custom. At least they have not observed it.

The carrying of stickers and seals on baggage and slickers was originally objected to because the students believed that the publicity derived therefrom was undesirable. Whether such publicity is a detriment to the College or not is still an open question. There is something to be said for both sides of the question. Decorating one's slickers and baggage with gaudy signs designating

one's Alma Mater may be considered a cheap and shabby method of advertising. Then again, most of the other colleges and universities have continued to follow the practice with no obvious undesirable effects. The exhibition of college insignia usually carries with it a certain glamour which is pleasing to most undergraduates.

The fact remains that the use of college seals and insignia is prohibited and therefore should be strictly barred as long as the prohibition remains in force. A custom ceases to be of value when it is no longer observed or approved of by the majority of the student body. If student opinion is against the custom regarding the exhibition of seals and insignia, the custom should be abolished. If not, it should be strictly enforced.

### GETTING OFF TO A FAST START

Tomorrow the spirit of vacation and midsummer indolence will be discarded in favor of textbooks and undergraduate activities. Tomorrow less than four thousand students will begin another nine months of serious preparation for life. Just as the sprinter who gets off to a fast start at the crack of the gun stands more chance of winning the race, so the student who begins the college year with the proper spirit and vigor has the greatest chance of finishing with flying colors. Especially is this true of the freshmen who are starting not only another year at college but their four-year career as undergraduates.

In scholastic work the importance of starting right is great. During the first few weeks the student forms habits of study which will likely follow him throughout the remainder of the year. If he begins by doing conscientious and creditable work, his task will grow continually easier, his grades will be high and his allotted time for recreation and diversion will steadily increase. If, however, the student begins by letting things slide, by putting each day's work off until the next, the mass of uncompleted tasks will accumulate, his daily lessons will become more difficult and incomprehensible, and before he realizes it, he will be politely informed that his college career is at an end.

There is an oft-quoted maxim that says, "first impressions are lasting." There is more than a grain of truth in this proverb. The undergraduate, whether in school work or activities, creates a lasting impression upon his superiors. If he creates a bad first impression, he will have a hard time living it down.

### The Bullosopher's Chair

Smithers: Tell me, Bullosopher, just why are freshmen customs?

"That's a question that hundreds of freshmen ask me about each year. It's a hard question to answer exactly, but there's a reason. In the first place a number of the neophytes arrive at college with an exalted idea of their own importance, gained, perhaps, at their commencement exercises in high or prep school. They are sitting on top of the world, smiling in a superior and satisfied way at the rest of us poor mortals. Freshman customs are necessary to make them human and companionable."

Smithers: But don't you think that these same customs weaken an unfair hardship upon the unassuming type?

"In some measure it is rather hard on that type, but at the same time yearling regulations bring this man the prominence and equality with others that his soul needs. Besides, customs are never a hardship for the man who takes them in the proper spirit."

Smithers: I still believe that freshman customs are a hardship for the extremely sensitive person.

"But after all, Smithers, isn't all of life a hardship for the super-sensitive souls?"

Smithers: Perhaps you're right. I hadn't thought of it in that light. Of course, many of the regulations are common sense enough on the surface. They enforce the formation of proper habits of conduct. But it seems to me that the custom known as Stunt Night is becoming more mechanical and stilted each year.

"Yes, Stunt Night seems to be gradually losing its original pep and spirit of high fun. I'm not sure that I know why. Perhaps the brutality that was, by dame rumor, associated with Stunt Night in the past has given it a bad name. Perhaps the attitude that Stunt night is a farce and a nuisance has grown up. But I don't know the true reason for the decline of Stunt Night."

Smithers: Don't you think that class customs, especially the seemingly useless ones, appeal to the imagination of the average undergraduate?

"They do. And that, Smithers, is a more important factor in the life about us than most of us realize."

### Thoughts of Others

Some little time ago, Charles A. Eastman, a Dartmouth college student, created quite a stir in academic circles by refusing to become a member of Phi Beta Kappa to which he had been elected. More recently another student this time a young lady, repeated his *beau geste* and had her picture printed in the daily papers. The reason for this action was briefly that they thought that marks were an imperfect standard by which to measure intellectual achievement, capacity of development in commenting on Eastman's radical step, the *Dartmouth* stated: "There is no prize for intellectual curiosity here. Instead we give the key to memorizers—goose-stoppers."

The requirements for election to this society differ in various colleges. In some a certain highest number in each class are chosen, and in others those with a certain general average. In any case it is fair to assume that everyone who recognizes the key of the organization realizes that the weaver was awarded it because he got high numerical grades. He probably realizes that these may be obtained by memorizing, blind labor or even by efficient cheating, but for the most part by honest, intelligent hard work. Even though the professors who give these marks are human enough to err, it does not seem too wrong to give the students who excel in their way of thinking, some material token of recognition.

The standard which those who refused the key, would set up are more indefinite and would allow for even more faulty judgment than those used at present. Perhaps it would be wise to select men for their excellent standing in intelligence tests, "Ask Me Another" examinations or Current Events Contests, or measure their intellectual curiosity by the number of questions they asked of the library, but there is a possibility that these methods might prove as indefinite and unreliable for picking out the really intelligent men of the college as the present one of marks. Fortunately, however, most people admit that membership in Phi Beta Kappa requires a certain set of marks, whatever they may be worth, and are perfectly willing to grant the members of the society this form of recognition and envy those who get it.

—Anonymous Student

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### Warlike Freshmen Make Early Debut In R. O. T. C. Raiment Under Sun's Rays

Apparently unmindful of the eyes turned in their direction, two members of the class of 1932 proudly exhibited to the world in general and State College in particular just how sartorially perfect one could appear in R. O. T. C. impedimenta. Sprightly stepping along under the torrid rays of Saturday afternoon's sun they seemed to be matching in time to some martial air. Several other bewildered members of the same class anxiously wondered if they were missing something, and in an effort to find out they followed the distinctive pair to New Beaver Field.

Unconscious of the numerous quizzical glances directed at them by both upperclassmen and members of their group they deliberately analyzed the merits of various members of the football squad. Arriving at the conclusion that Penn State would have a successful season, the plobes lastly toured the outskirts of the field, nodding to several acquaintances and glancing haughtily over following, to which had been added several students of State College grade school, held a respectful distance from the two ambassadors of the freshman class.

Though the puttees of one had gradually unwound and the hat of the other worked itself to a snug position over his left ear, they presented an appearance not strange to most of the officers of the R. O. T. C. unit here.



**Cathaum Theatre**  
AND  
**Nittany Theatre**  
Note: Nittany Theatre opens Friday, September 21.  
TUESDAY—  
Marion Davies, Jetta Gaudal in "THE CARDBOARD LOVER"  
WEDNESDAY—  
Richard Barthelmess, Marian Nixon in "OUT OF THE RUINS"  
THURSDAY and FRIDAY—  
Victor McLaglen, Lois Moran in "THE RIVER PIRATE"  
FRIDAY—Cathaum—  
Return Showing of  
Gratia Garbo, Conrad Nagel in "THE MYSTERIOUS LADY"

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