

Penn State Collegian

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FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 1929

MEDIOCRE AND CONTENTED

All the world is not self-satisfied and content to drift with the current or particular men would never poke their heads high above the masses to reach the limelight of distinction. These marked personages, however, are very, very few in comparison with the millions crawling around in this old sphere, intent upon nothing aside from passing away the time until the final moment comes for them to kick off and be relegated to wings or horns as the fundamentalists have predicted. And in swelling the ranks of this universal fraternity, whose sole requirement for admission is that the applicant be mediocre and contented, college men hesitate not at all in banging on the front door and begging the badge of self-complacency.

It is one of the great tragedies of American college and university life that so many students, capable in every respect without a doubt, straggle along in the lot of mediocrity, evincing every sign of contentment and displaying no particular desire to raise their rank. Nay, more! It is a crime that so many young men and women, fitted presumably by inherent qualities for future leadership of our country, should be permitted to spend four of the most fruitful years of their lives in a series of halcyon days, twiddling their thumbs and stoically awaiting the time that a piece of paper of doubtful worth will fling them out into the world of affairs as finished products.

To perform only what is required, remains a dominant trait of human nature. Further, the mass of students seeks just to "get by." That is all. Nothing more, and less if possible. The capable student, in general, is mediocre, recognizes the fact, but is content to remain so. Smug students concern themselves more with plans for warding off the knowledge which professors throw at them than in raising their mental level. It is a game, in fact.

In Woodrow Wilson's room while he was at college, there hung a sign bearing the single letter V. No one knew or could imagine its significance. When Wilson, however, gave the valedictorian address for his class, everyone realized the true meaning of the sign. Since his first day of college his goal was to be valedictorian. Woodrow Wilson was not mediocre. Neither was he contented.

One can be certain that the second-rate student will metamorphose little following graduation. By that time, his suave exterior covers very well his deeply-rooted laziness, his utter lack of originality, all his tendencies toward mediocrity. The years will strip him of his superficial cloak, revealing stark failure in attaining the peak of success, for, says President James L. McConaughy, of Wesleyan University, "the student who makes a habit during his college course of doing his second-best will discover after graduation that he has lost the power to do his best."

R. P. S.

TALKING MOVIES

When the first "horseless carriage" greeted the eye of the man in the street, he laughed uproariously. The great-grandfather of the high-powered steamline motor car of today was ridiculed and "boomed" (if they did "boop" in those days). The animated horse cart, however, proved practical and ere a decade had passed even the most hard-headed skeptics had to admit that it was an improvement upon quadruped transportation. During the past half-century various other inventions have appeared, been ridiculed and then permanently changed the complexion of our daily life.

Recently an innovation has been brought forward that will change radically the most popular form of American entertainment, the "movies." The innovation is the "talkies," Vitaphone, Movietone, or whatever you prefer to call it. It is an attempt to bring sound to the silent silver screen. In the first experiments the actors and their utterances often failed to correlate, calling forth laughs from the audience where the producer had least expected them, but at present the invention has been perfected up to the point where correlation is nearly perfect.

Movie theatres throughout the country have installed apparatus to reproduce talking pictures. In a few days the local theatre will open with the first "sound" movie in State College. It is difficult to conjecture just how students will receive the "talkies." Whether the undergraduate audience registers approval or disapproval, it is hoped that there will be no uncouth outbursts such as have occasionally occurred in the past.

A TRADITION?

Whether a gathering exclusively for freshmen shall become a tradition at Penn State will be revealed by the outcome of the Freshman Carnival tomorrow night in the Armory. The critical eye of the entire student body is focused upon this affair which is the first of its kind to be held on the campus. If successful, the carnival will be continued annually, but, should it fail in its purpose, the idea will be cast aside as a dead issue.

Before an act or an event can become a College tradition it must be proved worthy of that honor. The first step toward establishing an annual custom has been taken.

the plan has been drawn up and approved and all that remains to be done is to give it a trial. Whether or not the project will receive a fair trial depends upon the upperclassmen as well as the freshmen. The three upperclassmen can show their interest in affairs of the College by encouraging the underclassmen to attend the function tomorrow night. Every fraternity and non-fraternity organization should urge their freshmen to be present, if only for a short time. Initiations, which seem to be the main obstacle in the paths of certain fraternities, should be held later that night in order that the first-year men may be given an opportunity to play their vital role in the program.

There are several reasons why the carnival should prove successful. In the first place it is a College function, sanctioned and aided by College authorities. Secondly, it is an important means of bridging the gap that so often exists between the fraternity and non-fraternity factions. And finally, it is an essential factor in strengthening the ties that bind each class together, so that it may journey through four years of College life as a compact group instead of a loosely connected organization, having no mutative whatsoever.

Naturally it is the desire of those persons who have already given their undivided attention and support, that the gathering prove a success. This aspiration is not selfish in the slightest respect. To the contrary it is one designed to benefit the whole College. In recognition of the invaluable services which have been rendered thus far by a few, the entire student body should co-operate to make the event one which will go down in the history of Penn State.

HOOKS

With weather conditions changing constantly and class rooms over-crowded thereby causing poor ventilation, health conditions in the college are not at their best. The weather conditions cannot be changed nor the over-crowded rooms altered at once, but one thing that can be done for the betterment of the student health is the providing of more hat and coat racks in the buildings used.

At the present time the number of hats and coats in use, by the students, is far in excess of the number of racks provided. Something should be done and done at once.

The recent rainy weather and more that is sure to come with the Spring compels students to wear rain coats. To hold them during fifty minutes of class is certainly one of the greatest aids to sickness that could be invented.

With the Liberal Arts building as striking example officials and instructors can hardly notice it. Chairs not fastened to the floor are moved closer together to provide room for more students and that, of course, means over-taxing the ventilating system. Windows cannot be opened too much because of the draft that would be formed. As a result the air is damp and soon becomes heavy with carbon dioxide given off by the lungs of those in attendance.

Removal of the wet clothes from the room would aid greatly in any attempt to keep the air in good condition. It is towards this goal that the college should turn its efforts before the real rainy weather begins.

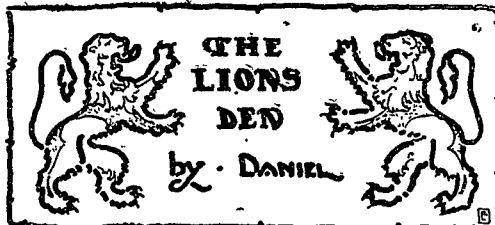
Q. E. B.

The Bullosopher's Chair

"There's just one thing that I've been thinking about for some time, but waiting with the hope that college officials will save me the trouble of expressing my thoughts." Smithers: Well, let's have it. Anything to remove undue strain from the upper portion of your anatomy.

"It seems to me that last year after daily chapel had been abolished there was some discussion, among the student body, of having a special period set aside at least once a month for a sort of special lecture. For this period a speaker of some renown was to be secured."

Smithers: "There was, but why bring that up?" "Oh I was just kind of wondering if anything had been done towards arranging such a period. It is true the college secures some fine speakers for Sunday chapel but all of us cannot attend those meetings." Smithers: You are right. Several talks by prominent men during the college term at regular intervals would keep us in touch with the outside world.



This touching bit of verse (which needs retouching) is the contribution of a lonely convict serving a life sentence (serves him right) at the State Pen. It is an original translation (without footnotes) with the plaintive note of a bird in a gilded cage (probably a striped robin):

*Denel, or Daniel,
Oh see haf you wuz
Spec last you wuz in de den?
Can it wuz so, what I shoulda' know
You iss broad-minded, keen wit de pen?
You critical taste,
Formed slowly wit haste,
While de hon iss bekink your hand,
You'll quickly seh "No!
Dees guy iss no Poe,"
Ven you do, for you cets de end,
I'm no Pennsy Dutchman,
In fact I'm a Scotchman,
So tightly de necktie I nose,
If you say dees ain't a rhyme,
Eet'l be de last time,
For dey'll carry you off in a hoise,
So you see dot disss get in de "den,"
So I'll take mine place by de men,
So famous in heestry
For poetry, mystery,
I'll see you soon ven
I leej de State Pen.*

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Vol. 2-1ef.

(Ed. Note. Due to the failing vision of the Linotyper, no translations will be accepted hereafter.)

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Twenty Years Ago

The first lecture in the course to be given this semester by the faculty of the English department was delivered last Friday night by Professor Pattee in the Old Chapel before a large and interested audience. The subject, "Macbeth," was a timely one as it will be played here by the Ben Greet players.

The annual interclass basketball game will take place Saturday night at 7:30 o'clock in the Armory. Judging by their practice workouts, the teams are about evenly matched. There is no need to tell Penn State students how close and hard-fought these yearly sophomore and freshmen clashes turn out to be.

The white and blue wearers trounced Manhattan away from home by the score of 23 to 16. With but three minutes to play Manhattan had the score tied at sixteen but the rapid shooting by Herrmann and Hoerle clinched a pretty victory.

The meanest man in College is the one that took forty or fifty baseballs from the Track House trophy case. These balls symbolize important State baseball victories and any information that may lead to their return will be looked upon as a patriotic service.

The first half of the 1910 La Vie was sent to the printer this week.



AND Nittany Theatre

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FRIDAY—Cathaum—
Matinee at 2:00
Dorothy Mackall, Jack Mulhall in "CHILDREN OF THE RITZ"

FRIDAY—Nittany—
William Boyd, Alan Hale in "THE LEATHERNECK"

SATURDAY—Cathaum—
Matinee at 2:00
Phyllis Haver, Raymond Hatton in "THE OFFICE SCANDAL"

SATURDAY—Nittany—
"CHILDREN OF THE RITZ"
Nittany Theatre

MONDAY—
Irene Rich, Robert Armstrong in "NED MCCOBB'S DAUGHTER"

TUESDAY—
"BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES"

WEDNESDAY—
Esther Ralston, Hobart Bosworth in "THE SAWDUST PARADISE"

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