

PENN STATE COLLEGIAN

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UNJUSTIFIED OPTIMISM

From many quarters comes a wailing on the unfortunate lot of the college students who are to be graduated this year. Some people, however, believe that there are advantages to graduating in a year of depression.

The all seems to be a noble attempt at making a dark situation appear bright and it merits the scoffing of the graduating class this year. What if these men of the earlier depressions do claim their molding lessons as the reason for their rise? There is nothing to prove that they would not have succeeded otherwise and, in fact, there is every reason to believe that they would have risen much more rapidly if they had been favored with good times.

Perhaps some of these men gained their position by taking advantage of the unsettled conditions of their times. In that event they should lay their success not to moral upbuilding by the conditions, but to luck and, possibly, to unscrupulous tactics. As in all political, economic, and social upheavals, the present depression will give rise to many new fortunes. As far as moral upbuilding is concerned it is a travesty on student intelligence to think that complete deprivation of work will exert good. Most students start out low enough on the working scale in prosperous times to secure the seasoning of moderation in all things.

Every year sophomores interested in public speaking go through eliminations for the Extemporaneous Speaking prize. Every year audiences have been conspicuous for their small size. It must afford a great deal of inspiration to the declaiming sophomores to face row or row of empty seats. Certainly their efforts and the work of the sponsors are deserving of more cooperation from the student body.

MARK MARTYRS

Just about this time of the year the educational process quickens in pace and begins to shape some peculiar phenomena. Just about now the grading system begins to press down its yoke and to steer students away from real education. The means to an education become an end in themselves. Reports and examinations begin to loom in size all out of proportion to their importance and then place.

The grading system works at these times of last minute pressure to fashion a peculiar procedure. It poses this way: If a man is to gain enough honor points and credits to be graduated, he must have certain grades. Now in order to obtain these grades he must turn in a specified number of reports of a certain quality and must put down so much information on the final examination. So it becomes far more important that these reports of a certain quality be turned in than that the man who turns them in should write them. So with the happy logic of the college man he agrees with himself that just so long as he gets them in before the deadline it does not greatly concern anyone to know who wrote them. Then, his conscience dealt with, he proceeds to find the best reports that are available and that are not too familiar to the instructor. With diligence he copies them. He hands them in, feeling that all is well and that nobody is wronged. The instructor gets the reports, the student gets the grades and his diploma. All's well.

But, as is so thoroughly propounded during Freshman Week and not so much later on, the student is not in college for grades. It's the education he is seeking. He is in college to gain learning, to learn thinking, to think originally. And so instead he gathers a large amount of practice in the art of the copyist. He is pressed into this copyist habit by the grading system and the attitude of mind which it creates.

Unless the student can free himself from this basically illogical attitude, he stands in danger of being left with proficiency in copying as his only collegiate gain. Either the realization of the true significance of the present grading arrangement must be brought to the student or this grade system must give way to a new pressure that affords a less dangerous incentive to learning.

OLD MANIA

If you're ever in the Free Library at Logan Square in Philadelphia, slide up to the desk and ask for 974.853-M45. 974.853-M45 is a volume entitled Industries and Institutions of Centre County by a guy named Maynard, and was published at Bellefonte in 1871. It's all about the industries and institutions of Centre County, with a red cover.

You'll find it an interesting book. For example, you can read about the hanging of Negro Dan in 1802. The rope broke. And then there was James Monks, who was hanged in 1819 to the tune of "Mary's Dear" a la life. Also Messrs Lewis & Connelly, who held forth on matters of pillage and arson at about the same time, and were shot up by the indignant citizenry. As a partial retribution for his crimes, Brother Connelly contributed his skull to the science of phrenology.

Under "Smaller Villages" we find that "At the State College there is a village containing a dozen or two dwellings, store, &c."

We have also been reading a mimeographed sheet entitled "June Commencement" which contains instructions to be observed by the commencees during the awesome ceremony. There are ten articles of conduct, and everything is beautifully worked out. The idea is that the College Marshal reigns supreme, and you can't do anything unless he gives a signal. When the Marshal is through giving signals, the graduates march out singing "The Blue & White," just as if nothing had happened. It's all very academic and impressive, and just goes to show what a wonderful thing is Education. A simple flick of a tassel from the right side to the left side of the cap, and presto! You're educated!

Under item No. 9, however, we find this: The President will rarely give a graduate his own diploma. There you are, ladies & gentlemen, there you are! This dept. comes to college, works like hell for four years, gets rings under its eyes & bells on its toes, loses weight, learns to disassemble an automatic rifle, and what do we get? Somebody else's diploma.

In times gone by we may have heaved a casual look or two in the direction of the Reserve Officers Training Corps & those who foster it. But not any more. No sir. We're all for them now. And why? Why, because for years we had been bothered by the sight of those wretched varsity tennis courts. They preyed on our mind. We laid awake at night brooding over them, and thinking how many bushels of potatoes a could raise on that piece of land, and sell to B @ 40c a bush. We thought of the tenement kiddies who would be happy with all that space to romp over. We shuddered at the sight of frivolous persons hating a silly ball about in the hot sun, when those courts might have been put to some useful occupation. We became morbid and morose, and would walk clear around by the power plant to avoid the sight of the little clay rectangle so wastefully dedicated to snail pleasures.

But now, all is well! The good old Army has stepped in and commandeered the courts, so that they will have more room to march in. From now on, we shall saunter past the Armory with our head held high, in the knowledge that those courts are courts no longer, but a solid, substantial, & beneficial drill field. We suggest that it be set aside for the exclusive use of the Peirshing Rifles.

But why stop there? After all, the Library is an eyesore on the campus, and contains nothing but a few dry books, several of which are dangerously Communist in tone. The South Liberal Arts Building is rather hideous—and more than one L. A. professor is openly pacifistic. Why not rip out those two buildings, and get yourselves a real drill field?

You're not pikers, are you?

THE MANIAC

Band Leader



FRED WARING

Dances Here at Penn State Gave Me Start'-Waring

"Playing for Penn State fraternity houseparties and week-end dances gave me my start in orchestra work," Fred Waring, dance band leader and former student here, said in an interview to the COLLEGIAN Wednesday.

"I paid my way through College that way, as I needed the money and the work appealed to me," the orchestra leader said. The "rhythm king" was at the College Monday and Wednesday, accompanied by his brother, Tom, and Miss Dorothy Lee, moving picture star.

"My first experience with a traveling orchestra came during the summer months of my College years. Later, I organized a bunch of College boys including several Penn State students into an orchestra myself," he said smiling reticently.

"Waring has just completed a winter contract at the Roxy theatre, New York City, where he conducted a sixty-piece orchestra. "This is the first vacation I've had in ten years," he said.

THESPIANS TO HOLD DINNER

Alumni and active members of the Thespians will hold a dinner at the Nittany Lion Inn Tuesday night. Girls who took part in the recent show will be guests of the Thespian club at the dance following the dinner.

Speaking Of Books

"Labories serve three functions: A library procures, cares for, and makes available the materials of scholarship. These three steps may be called collection, preservation and use. The last is the important one. Collection and preservation are necessary, but it is for use that all the other steps are taken."

Smith—"Kamongo"

Kamongo is the Jung-fish, that strange half fish, half animal which is able to breathe in water or in the ground. Perhaps we ought to say mud rather than ground for he spends almost half his time buried in the dry packed mud where he takes a long summer sleep shut off from both water and food. He apparently is the closest living object to that extinct link between the fishes and the first land animals.

Prof. Smith is a scientific investigator and this interesting study has the benefit of scientific fact behind it. But more than that it is written in an interesting semi-fictional form and the entire second half of the book is devoted to a discussion, prompted by the life of Kamongo, on the question of the mechanistic theory regarding the origin and growth of life.

Peterkin—"Bright Skin"

Mrs. Peterkin writes from intimate association with the negro on her home plantation. There is nothing patronizing or condescending in her picture of the negro but there is rather a keen sense of understanding and appreciation. The story is of a Gullah negro boy torn from his mother and sent to live with kinfolk far away from the home swamps.

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KEELER'S

Cathaum Theatre Building

Who's Dancing

- Tonight Blue Key at Sigma Nu (Closed) Bill Dotter / Scabbard and Blade at Nittany Lion (Close-formal) Campus Owls (Invitation) Varsity Ten Froth Board at Nittany Country Club (Closed) Omega Psi Phi at Y. M. C. A. Lounge (Closed) Tomorrow Night Pishmar Guk at Delta Sigma Chi (Subscription) Varsity Ten

Delicatessen or Community Kitchen Will Fill Any Menu or Food Orders Call 461-R or See MRS. I. M. HARVEY 119 South Burrows Street

SENIORS

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