

The Daily Nebraskan

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1913

THURSDAY CONVOCATION.

Program.
Antante Cantabile.....Tschaikowsky
String Quartet.
Capriccio Italien.....Tschaikowsky
Strings and Organ.
Edw. J. Walt—First violin.
Mrs. August Molzer—Second violin.
William T. Quick—Viola.
Miss Lillian Elche—Cello.
Mrs. Raymond—Organ.

BEGINNING COLLEGE LIFE.

To many boys the beginning of college is the first step into the world. Its dangers are much like those of other first steps into the world, yet with this difference: the college boy has the advantage of living where ideals are noble, and the disadvantage (if he is weak or immature) of living where he need not get heartily tired day after day in keeping long, inevitable hours of work. This disadvantage is indeed a privilege, but a privilege which like all privileges is had unless accorded to a responsible being. To discipline one's self, to hold one's self responsible, is ever so much better than to be disciplined to be held responsible by somebody else; but it is a task for man. Naturally enough, then the mistake and the sins of college life are commonly rooted in boyish irresponsibility.

The average youth takes kindly to the notion that in the first year or two at college he need not be bound by the ordinary restraints of law-abiding men and women. "Boys will be boys," even to the extent of solving wild oats. Time enough to settle down by and by; meanwhile the world is ours. A year or so of lawlessness will be great fun, and will give us large experience; and even if we shock some good people, we are but doing the traditional thing. A youth who feels thus takes prompt offense if treated, as he says, "like a kid;" yet he may do things so low that any honest child would despise them. Nor is this true of one sex only.

I have heard a married woman recount with satisfaction her two nights' work in stealing a sign when she was at college; and her father, a college man, listened with sympathetic joy. I have known a youth who held a large scholarship in money to steal, or as he preferred to say—"pinch" an instrument worth several dollars from the laboratory where he was trusted as he would have trusted in a gentleman's parlor. I have even heard of students who bought signs, and hung them up in their rooms to get the reputation of stealing them. Surely

there is nothing in college life to make crime a joke. A street "mucker" sneaks into a student's room and steals half a dozen neckties (for which the student has not paid), and nothing is too hard for him; a student steals a poor laundryman's sign for fun; may a gentleman do without censure what sends a "mucker" to jail? If the gentleman is locked up in the evening to be taken before the judge in the morning, his friends are eager to get him out. Yet in one night of ascetic meditation he may learn more than in his whole previous life of his relation to the rights of his fellow men.

One of the first lessons in college life is an axiom: Crime is crime, and a thief a thief, even at an institution of learning. The college thief has, it is true, a different motive from his less favorable brother; but is the motive better? Is there not at the root of it a misunderstanding of one man's relation to another, so selfish that, in those who ought to be the flower of American youth, it would be hardly conceivable if we did not see it with our own eyes? People sometimes wonder at the desire of towns to tax colleges, instead of helping them. A small number of students who steal signs, and refuse to pay bills unless the tradesman's manner pleases them, may well account for it all.

As there is nothing in college life to justify a thief, so there is nothing in it to justify a liar. College boys in their relation to one another are quite as truthful as other people; but some of them regard their dealings with college authorities as some men regard horse-trades. We know them capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood, since their standard of integrity for their teachers is sensitively high. Their standard for themselves is part of that conceit, of that blind incapacity for the Golden Rule, which is often characteristic of early manhood. To this blindness most books about school and college life contribute. Even the healthier of these books stir the reader's sympathy in behalf of the gentlemanly, happy-go-lucky youth who pulls wool over the eyes of his teachers, and deepen the impression that college boys live in a fairyland of charming foolery, and are no more morally responsible than the gods of Olympus.

Plainly such a theory of college life, even if no one holds to it long, nurses a selfishness and an insincerity which may outlast the theory that has nourished them. The man who has his themes written for him, or who cribs at examinations, or who excuses himself from college lectures because of "sickness" in order to rest after or before a dance, may be clever and funny to read about; but his cleverness and "funniness" are not many degrees removed from those of the forger and the impostor, who may also be amusing in fiction.—Le Baron Russel Briggs in "College Life."

Fordyce Speaks Thursday.

Dean Fordyce will address the weekly meeting of the University Young Men's Christian Association to be held in the Temple theater Thursday evening at 7 o'clock. The University pastors will be there and will be introduced to the student body.

The subject for the evening will be "The Church and the University." All student young men will be cordially welcomed. Special music has been provided.

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