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An Optimistic View.

The world is change, there is no death,
The good glides into better good,
The courage of a thousand years
Lives in the presents' hardihood.
The best of all we think and are
The future will unfold,
In higher thoughts and richer worth
And men of stancher mould;
For, lo, the shade of Herbert Bates,
Our ancient Prof. and saga-seer,
Decked in the brilliancy of Kline,
Still strides among us here.

CHAS. H. ROOT, in "Rhymes of a Gusher."

THE COLLEGE SMOKER.

Life at Columbia. A. S. Johnson Writes About It's Graduate Club.

Columbia, too, has a graduate club, large in numbers, small in enthusiasm. The bond of union among Columbia graduates is naturally very weak, as we come from every corner of America, and each pursue our own course. An artificial union with the graduate club of Barnard serves only to emphasize the loneliness of the Columbia graduate, since aside from a favored few, nobody knows anybody. So, were it not for the custom of having a man of note address the meeting, our club would be as purely mythical as the U. of N. Athletic Association when no "scrap" is on hand. As it is, we go, we listen, we disperse.

Man is, however, a gregarious animal. His social organism cannot be sustained by such diluted nourishment. We have accordingly organized a "College Smoker." Every two weeks we meet, we chat, smoke and drink beer, if we like, play billiards, if we can, and have some professor give us an informal talk.

Across the Boulevard about two squares from Columbia, stands the College Tavern. The front half of it looks like the mud houses we used to build before we had learned the art of making gabled roofs. This part looks as if it might have served as a shelter in the Battle of Harlem Heights. The rear half of warped discolored boards, looks much like a battered grocery box. As a concession to metropolitan taste the tavern makes a pathetic effort to present a classic front, with four spindling fluted columns and unsymmetrical gray pediment.

It is there where the student takes his hasty lunch of pie and beer. It is there that the hard worked professor moistens his throat on his way to the lecture room. And there it is where the College Smoker holds its fortnightly sessions.

You go through a long barroom and ascend a flight of stairs. On the second floor you find a wide low room, with the uneven beams of the ceiling sagging down threateningly in the middle. The gray plaster on the walls looks as if the plasterer, instead of applying it with a trowel had taken the soft cold mortar from the limy bucket, and slopped it against the rough stones. On the rough tables you find plates with cheese and crackers, and gravy bowls of Bull Durham and cob pipes, and bundles of long black stogies, inviting to enjoy who can.

Time was when a noisy crowd of graduates filled the hall so full that the admission of one more—the marginal man—would have precluded the possibility of further motion. Inverted cones of smoke, with bases fused into a hazy mass, poised tremulously over each head, and vibrated with the laughter and the hubbub. White aproned waiters edged about, peering through the smoke for the significant raisin of the fingers. "Three beers," and bringing trays with big tumblers of foaming brown liquid.

But unfortunately, graduate affairs always prosper inversely with the square of their history. So last evening the room was but sparsely occupied by a crowd that immediately divided itself into two cliques. At a small table at one end of the room was a group of three; the first with bridgeless nose, bald head, forward turned ears; the second with watery eyes, uncombed hair, and head joined to the shoulders without an intermediary neck; the third with a head like a Hubbard squash. Of course you have guessed that these are psychology students.

At the opposite end of the room are a half a dozen students quaffing beer. All have whiskers; all talk loud and use questionable English. That is the Political Science table.

The less typical students attach themselves to these two poles. For the classic graduates, the literature "posts," the scientists, the medics and the lawyers do not usually attend such affairs. Either their own fields are sufficient to their needs, or their gods are jealous gods, and do not allow their votaries to listen to strange prophets. The philosophy students, however, attend because they desire to know everything; the political science students, because they desire to know something.