

PENNSYLVANIA LETTER.

Editor Nebraska-Hesperian:

The dedication of Penn's magnificent new law building this past week has been the event of the season in university circles. It brought men prominent in the legal profession from all over the country; while nearly every university in the states as well as Oxford and Cambridge in England sent representatives. Addresses, receptions and ceremonials were the order of the day. But among them all none attracted and none deserved more attention than the speech of the Chinese minister to the United States—Wu Ting Fang—which was given at the academy of music on Washington's birthday as a regular university function, but this year added importance attached to the occasion owing to the opening of the law building and the assemblage of eminent men drawn together. The academy—long the most famous house of music in America—seats about three thousand, and standing room was at a premium. The parquet was given up to the college, and the second and third galleries to the professional schools, the balcony boxes and stage to guests and officials. The array of the latter was something impressive; the cap and gown is a part of university dignity here, and as the black robe is embellished by bands and chevrons red or blue or yellow or green or variegated according to the office and department of the wearer, the display is not without spectacular eloquence. But the robes of provost and dean were quite obscured by the splendid array of the orator of the day. His Excellency the Chinese minister, was attired in a flowing robe of golden-yellow satin figured with conventionalized foliage of the east. Over it was a tunic-like garment, satin again, which (I speak in doubt) the co-ed. might style bird's egg blue. A fur trimmed outer garment of steely hue was laid aside before the speaking began. We must not forget, either, the black red-crested cap—such as you have seen in Chinese novelty stores—with a glittering mandarin's button at the front.

The blue tunic was a sleeveless wonder. At first sight it seemed an innocent splendor. But as time passed it proved to be more commodiously stocked than Hermann's plug hat. Books, manuscript, handkerchief, fan,—what not?—appeared from its magical concealment when occasion required, as readily as smiles upon the placid face of the minister. And the smiles came often for the students loved to roll the celestial syllables of his name in rhythmic tongueings. Wu Ting Fang! It was the yell of a life time! And His Excellency was not wanting in courteous recognition.

But he has a tongue of his own too. His English would have done credit to a foreigner whose native speech was far more congenial to ours than Chinese. And as for the substance of his talk—well, he paper styled it "a brilliant and scholarly oration." I do not think it was properly speaking either brilliant or scholarly, but it was witty, keen and 'taking.' In fact Wu Ting Fang has taken Philadelphia by storm, and his witticisms are becoming proverbial.

Perhaps the best point in his oration was his suggestion that since Americans are now land-holders in Asia, we should extend the Monroe doctrine to that continent. It is evident, I think, that His Excellency is fully alive to the political importance of his position; and certainly he is winning friends for his country.

Among the episode of the day was an effort on the part of the 'dents.' to force their turn into the academy (the students marched thither in departmentally divided bodies) and obtain pick of seats. A row with the 'med-

ica.' was the consequence; but neither side could claim a victory. Earlier in the day there had been rumors of an impending 'scrap' between the 'medics.' and the 'laws' over precedence in the line of march, but a full police detail overawed any such project.

In the early days, departmental rows and feuds were common; but since the opening of Houston hall a spirit of unity and fellowship has superseded the old hostility. It is not in accordance with fitness nor prosperity to chat or smoke or play billiards with a man in the afternoon, and with the shades of night go on the war-path for his scalp.

I venture to say that Houston hall is the centre, as the dormitories and Franklin's Field may be considered the circumference, of Penn's "college spirit." Houston hall is the students club house, and it is the scene of social converse, political wire-pulling, class and college function alike.

The hall itself is one of the handsomest buildings in the campus. For description of it I cannot do better than quote from the members' club book.

"It is designed in the style which prevailed in England at the time of the transition from the Gothic to the Renaissance. The body of the walls is of a light gray stone, which comes from the quarry in long, flat pieces. The building has, therefore, a highly stratified appearance and the painting being done in a broad, old-fashioned manner, the stone-work has an effect of great stability. The mullions, transoms, sills, copings, etc., are of Indiana limestone, used in sufficiently liberal quantities to avoid the meagre effect which often results in American renderings of the Elizabethan style. Carved detail has been sparingly used and is in evidence only in a few shields bearing the arms of the donors and the initials of the donors at various parts of the exterior. Broad terraces paved with marble tiles and surrounded with stone balustrades extend in front of the doorways, and afford convenient meeting places for students in fine weather. And within the huge doors at either entrance is a roomy vestibule finished with a high wainscoting of paneled oak and surrounded with seats of the same substantial material. From inner doors one enters the central reception room. It is massively decorated in solid oak, uniform with the tables, chairs and easy seats. Wide fire-places at either end make the large space doubly inviting in cold weather by their fires of blazing logs. At the east end of this reception room are two widely-arched doorways which lead into the reading and correspondence rooms. The heavy oak pillars and the mantel-pieces over the fire-

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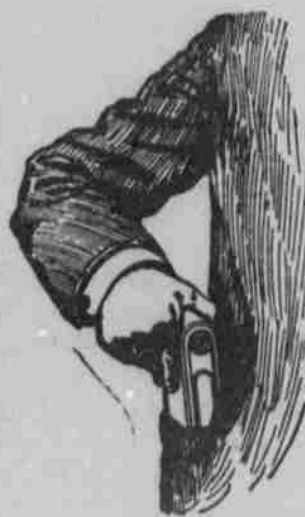
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