

A CLASS RUSH

In a college where there is decided antagonism between classes,—in other words "class spirit"—there is of necessity an occasion in the year when this antagonism may break forth unleashed. This occasion in some colleges is called a cane-break, in others a spree. In Princeton it is called the rush, and the rush, in college chronography, ranks with the Yale game and the mid-year exams. The rush is a queer institution and to anyone but a Princetonian it would seem the most idiotic of barbarous customs, you may call it by any disagreeable appellation you choose—brutal relic of feudalism,—insane exhibition of lawlessness, but the fact remains that it has its uses and its good points.

It happens on the second night of the fall term and the two lower classes take part. The Sophomores know what to expect and are prepared. The Freshmen are unorganized, it is all new to them and most of them are frightened. The object of the Freshmen is to capture an old cannon that stands muzzle down in the middle of the quadrangle. The cannon has a story of its own, but that can be told some other time. The Sophomores take possession of the cannon before the Freshmen arrive. If the Freshmen drive the other class away from the cannon they have won the rush. Otherwise the victory belongs to the Sophomores and the Freshmen never hear the last of it.

Now the rush is prohibited by the government of the University, but it comes off regularly, despite the watchfulness of certain offensive functionaries known as proctors. The Sophomores fall into line after dinner on the night of the rush, and parade the streets with hideous yells and class songs, probably for the purpose of enlivening their courage. Then they proceed to the cannon and wait. Meanwhile the upper classmen are busy rounding up the freshmen from their beds and rooms. It must be known that a Sophomore is an Ishmaelite against whom is every man's hand, and the sympathy of the college is always with the Freshmen. A rendezvous is appointed and here the Freshmen are herded and organized into a long column, six men wide, with the big men in front, to bear the brunt of the strife and the little men behind to push. The Sophomores are not idle, and they mass themselves as compactly as possible about the historic lump of cold iron that is to be the innocent object of the struggle. Both classes fill the atmosphere with hurrying yells and challenges, and if you are a stranger in the land you marvel at the fierceness and blood-

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thirstiness of the men who are about to fight. You will have better cause to marvel later.

Slowly the Freshman column starts, and as it swings into motion, winding like a long serpent under the flickering gas lights, cheer after cheer rises from hundreds of throats, and grim, sweaty faces testify to the mental and physical strain. Onward the heavy body charges, gaining momentum at every step. Silent are the Sophomores, and the big men in the front ranks gather themselves for the attack. With a plunge the two classes come together, there is a sickening shock, then all is tumult. Tossing, surging, pushing, striving inch by inch, the mass of human men loses its identity and a general melee follows. Sometimes a Freshman succeeds in climbing upon the cannon, but he soon disappears in the midst of a seething mass of wildly fighting forms. Sometimes a pair of men will roll out from the side of the human maelstrom fighting like cats. Sometimes a Freshman will stagger away, hold his head for a moment and jump back into the fray again with utter disregard for self. And thus the battle rages over the cannon in the dark, and no man can ever tell which class wins. At the end of half an hour the men leave the field, exhausted and black-eyed, covered with gore and glory, and the rush is over.

Disgusting affair, isn't it! Yet it has been productive of one good result. It has taken a conglomeration of men from every corner of the earth, and it has hammered them into one solid, undivided sentimental organization known as a class. The men have fought and bled together on the quadrangle soil and struggle in a common cause and until the last member of the class dies seventy years hence the name of that class will be loved and honored.

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