

A Sketch on College Amusements

Some Striking Points of Difference Between the Old and the New

The past twenty-five years has witnessed some radical changes in the character of college amusements. The tendency has been toward the elimination of the rougher elements along certain lines and the introduction of the scientific spirit into athletics. The spectacular still continues to attract the greatest interest, as most students are amused more by watching others act than by taking part themselves. Especially is this true in football, where the struggles of a few furnish amusement for the multitude.

The day of class fights and pitched battles on the campus is practically of the past, such outbreaks being of extremely rare occurrence. The time was when factions of students loved to meet and fight out their differences in pitched battle, in which canes, clubs and missiles were frequently used with disastrous effect. Heads were broken, limbs fractured and blood ran freely, the surest way to attain distinction being to lay out an opponent or capture a prisoner. Some of the most desperate struggles centered over the possession of the killed or wounded, the action of such encounters being truly Homeric in detail. The victorious party would tie their prisoners to trees, where they would disfigure their faces and clothes with paint, lamp-black and chemicals to their heart's content. But the spreading of the truth—consisting of the vigorous action of college authorities, better police organization and the influence of Christian bodies—has contributed to the passing of such occurrences.

A drunken student on our campus is a rare sight, indeed. And yet students in this plight were to be frequently encountered on the campus of the average institution a generation ago. In fact little note was taken of such occurrences and no regulations were in force prohibiting them. But now let a drunken student show his face on our campus and note the effect. For him there would be a speedy court of inquiry and a trip home with a strict injunction not to return. The organization of Christian associations has had much to do with the elimination of this objectionable feature in college life, the work being done by them in the large eastern colleges being especially noteworthy.

Hazing is now on its last legs, the recent fatality at West Point leading to its downfall in a place where it had its strongest hold. When the practice of hazing was at its height a Freshman took his life in his hands when he entered college. No form of punishment was too severe for him and the number and nature of the modes of torture in vogue would have shamed the repertoire of a North American Indian. The unwary Freshman was visited by a delegation, who either enticed or forced him to accompany them. The terrible experiences of that awful evening could not help but remain fresh in his memory as long as he lived. Seated astride a rail he was taken to see the sights, being welcome to whatever comfort he could derive from his position. He was tattooed, ducked, tossed and pummelled until his spirit was ready to depart. When he was released he was a full-fledged Freshman, with a right to come and go in the future without fear of being molested. The fraternities of today keep alive some of these traditions in a milder form, and their treatment of candidates savors not so much of harshness as it does of the grotesque.

Football has always been a popular game and has always attracted large crowds and aroused much enthusiasm. The popularity of the game has been increasing in all parts of the country, in spite of attempts to stir up legislative action against it, and at this University it has received a great impetus of recent years. Ever since Nebraska had shown her ability to vie with the great colleges of the middle west on the gridiron, our student body has been almost frantic in its support of the team. The great game with Minnesota three years ago brought to light Nebraska's potential powers, and the great game of last year is the result of the most scientific training that could be devised. When the grandstand and bleachers are crowded to overflowing, every inch of standing room within the

grounds taken and every point of vantage in the neighborhood occupied, as was the case in the two leading games last year, the game of football could hardly be said to be dying out at Nebraska. It is the excitement of the spectacle and the strong sympathy for our heroes that calls forth such great throngs of students, citizens and excursionists. They love to witness the brilliant feats of individual players and the struggles of the opposing teams for the mastery. Whenever a clever run or tackle is made by one of Nebraska's men the multitude roar out their applause in genuine delight, nor are they chary of their praise when an opponent performs the same feat. Never does the old main hall seem so imposing as in the moment of victory, when the throngs roll out the University yells and sing the University songs. It is such occasions as this that foster a pride in the hearts of the students for their alma mater and for the achievements of her sturdy sons.

Some wild forms of student enthusiasm are often exhibited upon occasions when victory is perched on Nebraska's banner. While such celebrations are as a rule not of a protracted character the streets are traversed by a howling, yelling and zig-zagging line of students, who use these means of letting the public know that they are proud of Nebraska's victory. Upon such occasions the amount of damage done is ridiculously disproportionate to the amount of noise made. Although the police are vigilant few students are rounded up in the melee, as the citizens of the town seem more inclined to enjoy the sight than to disparage it. About the greatest atrocity ever committed was the assault on the mule car occurring last fall, when the fiery steeds were unharnessed and the car transferred to O street where it blocked the traffic for some little while. In former years such celebrations were usually accompanied by a fight, and many students were so rejoiced in spirit that they freely partook of the bowl that inebriates. An officer of the law was a common enemy and whenever discovered was to be exterminated without mercy. He was an intruder upon the program—an uninvited guest but allowed to remain unmolested as long as he behaved himself.

Baseball, tennis, track events and gymnasium exhibitions attract a great deal of attention, but are less productive of opportunities to achieve fame than football. Still they occupy an important place in the list of college sports. Students love to stand at their ease and watch a star pitcher or a fast runner perform, with the same passiveness that characterizes all college amusements. While there is little real enjoyment for a majority of athletes beyond the elation of victory, they bend their best energies to win, just for the glory there is in it. There is no entrancing pleasure about the rigorous training required of football players, yet few complain, because they know that if they perform their parts well, the plaudits of the multitude will be their reward.

Basket ball is a game of recent origin, but one that has come to stay. Here a better opportunity is offered to players as well as the spectators for enjoyment. The excitement of the play causes all the players to forget their injuries in their eagerness to score on their opponents. The game is still young here, and the first teams have not yet established any brilliant records against other colleges. The girls' basket ball team made a very creditable showing last year, winning several fine games by overwhelming scores. The matches of the class teams have aroused considerable dormant class spirit, but it is to be hoped that this year each class will take a greater interest in the welfare of its team than it did last year.

So much for athletics. A look at the intellectual side of college life. Debating, as a whole, received more attention last year than it has for several years previous. The sweeping victories of the year before may have contributed to this result, but the crushing defeat administered to Kansas at the outset also had a wholesome effect. The literary societies all attract large crowds of students, and their programs

are made as attractive as possible. New students are especially welcome. The debating clubs furnish much practical training for candidates for places on the interstate debates. Each club takes a special pride in having as large a representation as possible on the interstate teams.

Open acts of hostility are seldom displayed between classes as a whole, but certain individuals take it upon themselves to uphold the honor of their class by inflicting some injury upon a rival class. Such pleasant exchanges of compliments as appropriating the refreshments prepared for a rival class-party, the disfiguring of clothes and faces by chemicals and "fermented" eggs and the kidnapping of the class president or master of ceremonies, have been for many years of such frequent occurrence as to hardly excite comment. But now a ban has been put upon such diversions and offenders against it are in peril of exile to their native land. Students are fond of playing pranks, and if their activities are curtailed in one direction they are sure to break out in another. Class spirit in order to be kept alive must have some way to manifest itself, and it leans rather to mischief making than to supporting the representative class organizations.

Of course there are numerous other ways in which students seek to amuse themselves, but these are not uniquely college diversions. Card playing, dancing, fudge-making, and so on through the list, are by no means strictly college affairs, and while pleasant to dwell upon can not be given space here.

One may not appreciate the unique character of college amusements, until he has gone out into the world. Then as he reads of the exploits of the athletic teams, of the atrocities of the shirt-tail paraders, he feels a nameless longing to be back once more and mix in with the rest of the fellows. Yet he will always treasure the recollections of the part he performed upon some memorable occasion, and never tire of telling it wherever he can find a ready listener.

THE LITERARY SOCIETIES.

The Palladian Society has begun work for the year with a strong membership and is starting along all lines of activity with new energy. With the exception of a few strong members, who graduated last June, nearly all the old members have returned.

Quite a little work in the way of interior decorating has been done. Among other things a new window seat has been added. Several of the Palladian girls have made sofa pillows for the hall and more are being made.

The new committees are at work, and are planning a busy term. The membership and program committees are especially active. The officers for the fall term are as follows:

President—Ema Shinbur.
Vice President—Russell Moore.
Recording Secretary—Annie Moore.
Program Secretary—Mingle Petrashek.
Corresponding Secretary—Nellie Miller.
Music Secretary—Roy Clark.
Treasurer—James Anderson.
Historian—Elizabeth Hawxby.
Critic—T. M. Hewitt.
Serg't-at-arms—T. A. Hutton.

Delian.

The Delian Society lost about twelve of its strongest members last June, but those who are left are taking up the work with vim and the prospects for a prosperous year are very good.

The society will change the plan of work slightly this year. Some changes in the constitution are anticipated.

One evening each month will be devoted to social work.

The officers are as follows:
President—F. T. Vasey.
Vice President—Rose Wirth.
Music Secretaries—Miss Mathews and Miss Wheeler.
Secretary—Miss Horning.
Treasurer—Mr. Frank Beers.
Critic—Mr. Towne.

Union.

The Union Society has begun work along the old lines, but will do some new things this year. Plans for improvements in Union Hall are under consideration. A new carpet is proposed and a new arrangement of the

lights. The officers for the first term are as follows:

President—C. R. Sargent.
Vice President—M. J. Brown.
Secretary—Miss May Thomas.
Treasurer—Mr. Keyser.
Critic—Kate Hurley.
Senator—C. J. Berkey.
Historian—Grace Sargent.

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Don't forget the Y. M. C. A. union meeting Sunday at 3 p. m. An address will be delivered by Mr. G. M. Velte, on "College Life in India." It will be held in U. 106. Remember the time and place.

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