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A MESSAGE FROM MR. VAN LOON

In the College Press department of The Daily Nebraskan there may be found an article on intercollegiate athletics, written by Henrick Van Loon, which appeared in The New Student last autumn. His attacks on athletics, on stadiums, alumni and the general tendency of American colleges, contain enough truth to make them formidable. He has selected the vulnerable spots in college athletics with a keenness of perception which places his opponents on the defensive. A few more attacks like this one and those who believe in the value of intercollegiate athletics as they are now organized, will be hard put to find an adequate defense.

SCHOLARSHIP

The interfraternity banquet at which plaques will be awarded to those fraternities whose scholarship averages are above a certain rank, will be held soon.

Efforts such as this to raise the level of fraternity scholarship are worthy of support and commendation. It is to be doubted, however, if they will ever be successful in what they are attempting to do until a rather important change takes place. There will have to be created in the fraternities a real spirit of scholarship, a spirit which is concerned with some thing more fundamental than grades and academic averages. The fraternity members will have to come to feel a real interest in the work that the University is doing—an interest which will prompt them not so much to maintain a certain scholastic average as it will lead them to read, to discuss their work and their studies, and to feel as much respect for the man who makes scholarship his purpose in University as for the man who devotes his energy to other things.

Good grades can be nothing more than the external indication of the existence of this spirit. They may exist without it, but they mean nothing.

How to create this spirit is a problem. Banquets, plaques, scholarship contests—these things help. Certain reforms in the organization, the methods, the curriculum of the college itself will also be of assistance. When these things have succeeded in creating in the fraternity an interest in scholarship equal at least to the interest it now has in activities and athletics, the scholarship problem will have reached a point where the question of grades and numerical averages will be non-important.

The College Press

THE STADIUM Henrick Van Loon

It is really quite useless, my writing upon this subject. Whenever I open my mouth and say something about football, the answering chorus is, "Oh well, but how could we expect a poor foreigner to understand our national game?" And then follows a Chant of Praise to the wondrous and altogether marvelous effect of the game upon our academic, our national and our racial life. Until I subside and ask whether anyone has seen "The Ten Commandments." For somehow or other, that shoddy and maudlin representation of a tin of Moses seems to bear the same relation to the true story of Exodus as modern college football has to a sound development of healthy sport. And whenever I contemplate the sombre manseleums that stand in Cambridge and New Haven and Princeton (and that some day will stand wherever three yokels are met together in the name of Higher Learning) I feel inclined to regard them as the tombstones underneath which repose the ancient and honorable ideals of the free Commonwealth of Scholars.

Stadiums Emblems of Greed Mind you, I have nothing against the stadiums (or stadiums of stadiums).

or whatever you wish to call them in an un-Greek age). This is a free world. Go ahead and build all the stadiums and hooch-factories and bawdy-houses you wish, but do not build them on the campus. For these temples of greed are erected to other Gods than those that ought to be worshipped within the confines of an honorable Republic of Letters. Wherefore, in my simple mind, I condemn them now on and evermore. Amen.

Of course, I know the usual answer; the cheering crowds, the gay sights, the strong virile he-men, idolizing the even stronger, more virile he-coach, the grand future before the boy that makes the winning punt, admitted straightway to a prominent position as bond-chaser in Lee Huginson's well-known counting-house.

Suppose that all these things were true, which they are not, what in God's name have they to do with University life?

The cheering crowds use the football game as an anaesthetic for their own vacuous boredom. They would rush in triple numbers to bull-fights if these were allowed on the northern banks of the Rio Grande.

Athletics Enticed to College

The strong, virile he-men, eleven (or a hundred if you count in the subs) out of four or five thousand candidates, nine times out of ten are mums with heavy muscles and heavy hams, cajoled into an academic career by the promise of certain indulgences which so upset the honest soul of the Rev. Doctor Martinus Luther were innocent rainchecks.

While they are undergoing what is commonly called "training" they are fed disgusting slabs of red beef and are therefore unable to do any work which requires concentrated attention such as the learning by heart of the table of multiplication of the Statute of Limitations. They are fed warmed-over editorials by Doc. Crane about "Jesus on the Bleachers" and Saint Paul on the Field of Battle, and this may account for the fact that they cheat with a sort of early-Christian simplicity which is almost touching.

Players in After Life

As for the golden future which awaited these Crusaders of the Grid-iron, I possess no statistics but off-hand I would say that most of them became in after life exactly what they had been in college, rather amiable but hopelessly second-rate white collar slaves. The few "Big Bill's" and "Old Ed's" who are forever being dragged out as an example of what-football-will-do-for-you are not exactly the sort of people you would select as specimens should the Good Lord ever ask us for a few contributions to his Museum of Representative Citizens.

Then what remains? A circus. A circus maintained by and for and of the alumni and their idle lady-friends.

That the alumnus is a thrice-cursed evil to the college which he left ten or twenty years before, all those who have ever studied the subject know. He sees the old place through a haze from old jimmy-pipes (ten dollars at Ye College Shoppe), yodels the academic National Anthem wherever he gets drunk at his class dinner and then decides that it is time to do something for "Good Old Fenn."

The Alumni Influence

This "doing something for the old place" usually means doing something which gives him (the grad) some definite advantage or pleasure and which has no connection whatever with the college itself except that it bears the same name, like

Harvard beer or Yale suspenders. As the diploma upon the wall of his billiard-rooms shows that he has spent four years forgetting how to think for himself, he easily believes those slogans of success which are provided into the present generation by the eminent spiritual leaders of the local Pelman Institute.

Of course if the alumnus asked his beloved president or his dear old professors about it, he would hear differently. But he never asks them about anything. He regards these good people as slightly imbecile and super-annuated retainers who have failed to make a success of things and who had better shut up, now that their salaries have been increased by ten dollars and forty-nine cents every term during the last five years. He tolerates them; but he would as likely asked their opinion upon the subject of stock investing as that of education. And so he goes in for football. For that, after all, gives him the greatest chance to splurge with his new car and his new fire and go back to the dear old place and make a damned nuisance himself.

Some day we shall have a college president who will possess private means and a serious sense of his high obligations and he shall shout these things from the top of the nearest stadium. Then the assembled alumni, led on by the professional coaches, trainers, rubbers, nose-guard manufacturers and the Board of Trustees, regretfully but firmly shall insist upon the immediate resignation of their Commander-in-Chief.

So why, I repeat it, should I try to give you my opinion?—The New Student.

TWO WILL GIVE PROGRAM

Mary Ellen Edgerton and Harriet Cruise Will Give Recital

Mary Ellen Edgerton, violin, and Harriet B. Cruise, voice, will give their junior recital Thursday evening, May 14, at the Temple theater. Miss Edgerton is a student of Carl Frederic Steckleberg of the University School of Music and Miss Cruise is a student of Homer Compton of the University School of Music. Dorothy Payne and William Hart will

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WILL GIVE RECITAL

Clara Callender Will Present Program at Temple Friday. Clara Callender will give her senior recital Friday evening, May 15, at the Temple theater. She is a student of Laura Schuler Smith of the University School of Music. Orchestral parts on the second piano

NOTICES

All notices for this column must be written out and handed in at the editorial office, U Hall 10, by 4:00 the afternoon previous to their publication. Big Sister Initiation. Big Sister Initiation will be held Thursday from 5-7 at the College of Agriculture campus. Tickets for the picnic supper may be secured at Miss Cook's office until Wednesday night.

Cosmopolitan Club. Members of the Cosmopolitan Club will hold a dinner and election of officers Sunday at 10 o'clock in the Elk's Club rooms. Square and Compass Club. Square and Compass Club will meet this evening at 7 o'clock at the Temple. Round table discussion is on the program, also election of officers. Tassels. Meeting of the Tassels Tuesday at 7:10 in Ellen Smith Hall. Union. Business meeting of the Union Tuesday at 7 o'clock. Secondary Education Club. Annual picnic for all prospective high school teachers at the Epworth lake park Wednesday. Meet at the Teachers College at 5 o'clock. Tickets fifty cents. Gamut Club. Gamut Club members will hold a picnic at the Antelope park Friday from 5 to 7 o'clock. Tickets fifty cents. Meet east of the Teachers College.

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