

THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

VOL. XXXIX.

GRAHAM, N. C., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1913.

NO. 3

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WOODROW WILSON

The Story of His Life From the Cradle to the White House

By WILLIAM BAYARD HALE

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CHAPTER VIII.
Democracy or Aristocracy?

DR. WILSON had served five years as president of Princeton university before he reached the point of irrepressible conflict. So long as he confined himself to strictly educational workings of the school he had been allowed to have his way without much opposition. But now, when his constructive mind reached over to the student's social life and undertook to organize that and bring it into proper relationship with the other elements of university life, he found that he had put his hand upon what the guardians of the aristocratic institution were really interested in and what they were not disposed to see changed.

In brief, his idea was the organization of the university in a number of "colleges" or "quadrangles"—practically dormitories—each of which should harbor a certain number of men from every class, with a few of the younger professors.

President Wilson secured the appointment of a committee consisting of seven of the trustees to investigate the merits of the "quad" proposal, and at the June (1907) meeting of the committee reported that he was a supporter of the plan.

Mr. Wilson's plan. The report of this committee was accepted and its recommendation adopted with only one dissenting vote, twenty-five of the twenty-seven trustees being present, at the June meeting.

What was a man with the "quad" proposal?

That—that it cut into the aristocratic social structure which the dominating element in Princeton had erected for itself.

While visiting Princeton, you will proceed to the top of a hill known as Prospect avenue and pass down it if you will see something which probably is not paralleled at any seat of learning in the world. Prospect avenue is lined with clubhouses, twelve of them with handsome buildings, beautiful lawns and tennis courts.

Some of the clubhouses are sumptuous, comparing very favorably with the best city clubs. Their aggregate value is estimated at \$1,000,000.

The clubs house on an average thirty members each—fifteen juniors and fifteen seniors, about 250 in all, Juniors and seniors alone being eligible. Three hundred other members of those classes can get into no club. From this highly exclusive membership in a swaggering feature of Princeton life, estranged from the university and yet having more to do with the real forming of its students than any other feature of the college life.

No one can reflect for a moment upon this club system without understanding its essential viciousness.

The trouble is that the clubs nearly constitute an aristocracy in the midst of a community which should, above all things, be absolutely democratic. It may be all very well for the 200 youths who enjoy the delights of the Ivy, the Cap and Gown, the Colonial, Tiger Inn and the rest (though such luxury is of questionable value to a boy who has yet to make his way in the world, but what of the 200 young men who have not been able to "make" one of them? They feel themselves ostracized and humiliated. The seeds of social bitterness are sown in their souls. There is no provision for their outside of common boarding houses. Not a few leave the university.

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The trustees, who had voted the plan through with but a single dissenting voice, now frightened by the alumni howl, were persuaded to reconsider. On Oct. 17 the board requested President Wilson to withdraw the proposal.

The inalienable right of the American college youth to choose his own habits and conduct other youths to wear untrimmed headgear was thus triumphantly vindicated. But the saviors of the club system were not generous in victory. They continued to hurl insults upon President Wilson.

It was now discovered that he was a non-trimmed, brutal, bigoted, uneducated and untruthful demagogue. The preceptorial system, which had been in operation for two years, with everybody's approval, was now also attacked.

President Wilson was even charged with having inaugurated it over the heads of the faculty. Various classes among the alumni withdrew their subscriptions for the support of preceptors. It took only a few months of this sort of thing for the board of trustees, the faculty and the alumni to find themselves divided beyond compromise. Lifelong friendships were broken. The chasm deepened, and passions so violent that it would not have been deemed possible for a collegiate to possess them were aroused.

It is a little difficult to see why the question should have provoked such a tongue-lashing bitter fight which now broke out at Princeton. To find the real cause of it all one must go deeper than the issue presented on the surface, much deeper than the mere personality of the president. As to the latter, it is quite possible that Dr. Wilson's positive character, the certainty of his convictions and his aggressiveness in expressing them may have been distasteful to men long accustomed to other methods. It is even possible that the president was not in good luck in his manner, perhaps not always so tactful, as he might have been, as he has since become. Undoubtedly a man of exceeding charm of personality, he had his grim side—no man descended from a line of Scottish Presbyterians.

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CHAPTER IX.
The Graduate College Contest.

THE story now becomes complicated through the injection of another issue that, namely, of the graduate college. Some time before the election of Professor Wilson to the presidency Professor Andrew F. West, a brilliant and persuasive member of the faculty, with ambitions, had been given the title of dean of the graduate school, together with an appropriation of \$2,500 to be used in studying graduate systems of instruction in various universities.

Dean West went to Europe for a year, returned and published a pamphlet containing an elaborate and highly illustrated scheme for a graduate college. It was never seen by the faculty. The book was sent by Dean West to likely contributors among the alumni.

In December of 1903 Mrs. J. A. Thompson Swanwick, left \$250,000 for the beginning of a graduate college. Among the conditions of the gift was the provision that the new college should be located upon grounds of the university.

In the spring of 1905, through the influence of Dean West, Mr. William C. Proctor of Cincinnati offered \$500,000 for the graduate college on condition that another half million dollars be raised. Mr. Proctor's letter seemed to imply that the money must be used in carrying out the scheme formulated by Dean West. The trustees had chosen for the graduate college the trustees. In his second letter addressed to President Wilson Mr. Proctor named two locations which alone would be acceptable to him.

So long as Dean West's scheme for a graduate college was a paper plan, it had received no special examination. But when these two bequests made its realization possible the plan was given scrutiny. It was apparent to many of the trustees and faculty that Dean West's elaborate plan was not one to which they were prepared to submit themselves definitely.

An special committee of five, appointed by the president of the board of trustees, reported against the unconditional acceptance of Mr. Proctor's gift.

Mr. Proctor's answer was a withdrawal of the offer and a cause of action naturally caused a sensation and brought down upon the head of President Wilson all the vials of wrath that had not been already emptied upon him. It was inevitable that some in the board of trustees, to a large number of the alumni and to a number of the trustees, a gift of \$500,000 (carrying with it indeed the prospect of another \$500,000, for this had already been nearly subscribed) could be rejected on any consideration whatsoever. But in view of the perfectly clear position taken by President Wilson, the trustees, the majority of the trustees, the passionate outcry against them shown by some Princetonians of general repute for intelligence and conscience does seem inexplicable. It was a perfectly clear case. President Wilson and the trustees were in agreement. They accepted Mr. Proctor's gift, but they simply could not abrogate the duties of their office—they simply could not surrender to any donor the right to determine the university's policy in so grave a matter.

The trustees were divided beyond compromise. Lifelong friendships were broken. The chasm deepened, and passions so violent that it would not have been deemed possible for a collegiate to possess them were aroused.

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