

The Daily Tar Heel

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Thursday, December 15, 1932

Free Expression

Made Useful

If directed in the proper channels the student opinions floating around the campus at this time of the year as to the comparative worth of various courses in the curriculum, can be of untold value to the professor if he will but grant them the liberty of expression.

After teaching a course from year to year for as many as five or six years—or possibly longer—a professor can only by an application of superhuman will-power prevent himself from getting into one definite rut. And in this rut he usually remains until someone points out his plight. He soon comes to the point where the course is nothing more than a matter of habit. The jokes are the same year in and year out; the notes remain identical except for a few minor corrections; and the entire method of teaching changes not one iota throughout the entire time.

To the professor who has become accustomed through continual practice to the details of his course, there appear few flaws. But to the student who must take the course only one quarter, and then along with others, the flaws stand out quite vividly. Hence if at the end of the quarter the professor will only require each student to turn in an anonymous criticism of his course, he would be able to see himself and his teaching in the light of his own pupils. And as a result he would be well supplied with new ideas, if ever he took upon himself the task of replanning the course.

The professor will, no doubt, disregard this suggestion, doubting the students' ability to teach a course anyway. But if he does take such a viewpoint, he overlooks the fact that such a doubt is likewise prevalent in the minds of the students regarding his own abilities in this field.

Hope Springs Eternal

Are you interested in puzzles? Jig-saw puzzles? Crossword puzzles? If you are, it is an indication that you have the makings of a scientific mind—a mind which takes delight in solving problems. There is a strong tendency, however, that one's interest in the apparently insoluble may stop with crossword puzzles, or jig-saw puzzles—may just stop at that, "and nothing more."

Should such a deplorable condition prevail it would be an indication that the full flowering of this gift had atrophied through some perverse cause. An early interest in puzzles normally should blossom into an interest in ever more complex things. It is an indication of youth to be always developing. Leonardo da Vinci was an excellent example of this sort of thing; so was Descartes.

Nevertheless it seems that instead of developing our interest along such lines we allow it to wither away, thereby losing for ourselves and for society an invaluable, irreplaceable boon.

Why should we lose the full benefit of this tendency? How does it come about? The solution is one of extreme complexity. It carries with it notions of brain development, educational and familial influences, economic conditions and social pressures. The careful nurture of this combination of desire for achievement and curiosity constitutes a real challenge to the social order. Just as far as it develops and fructifies, thereby is determined the degree of hope for the solution of our weighty problems of today.—V.J.L.

Representative McFadden (R., Pa.) should get the Congressional Medal. He woke the entire House for the first time since Andrew Johnson.

Belgium and France are pretty smart. They have at last heard the latest styles in America: "Blame it on Hoover."

"Varsity Boxers Are in Condition as Exams Start" says a head in yesterday's paper. But wait until they are over.

If the co-eds here take up fencing as it has been rumored, we venture to say that the number of "untouched" girls will decrease rapidly.

OUR TIMES

By Don Shoemaker

Preferences

The *New York Times*, no bashful news sheet, reports that the seniors of Wheaton College, Norton, Mass., think it the best newspaper in the country; choose *The New Yorker* as a favorite magazine; like Dartmouth best of the colleges; prefer: Robert Montgomery; Ogden Nash, author; John Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy and A. A. Milne next in order; matrimony ten to one; to start a home on twenty-five dollars a week.

Other Wheaton preferences: good humor in a husband (personality and ambition with intelligence trail); presidency of the United States, poetry writing and conducting of a symphony orchestra are desired occupations.

This, we feel, is a complete picture of the modern woman. She likes Ogden Nash, a twenty-five dollar husband, intelligence, and symphony orchestras.

Phased by none of this, we present the preferences of ten of our senior friends:

Favorite newspaper—Seven can't read; one, *New York World*; two, *La Vie Parisienne*. Favorite magazine—Seven, *Liberty*; three, *Film Fun*.

Best actress—Ten, Sari Maritza.

Favorite authors—Seven, Edgar Guest; one, William Faulkner; one, Dorothy Dix; one, Tiffany Thayer.

Favorite sport—Seven, solitaire; three, Greensboro.

Qualifications for Wife—Ten, money.

Ambitions—Ten, vague.

Science
The Machine Age, we beg to report, has made progress since this time last column. Man, unmindful of the labor problem and unemployment, is still the inventor of time saving appliances. Our latest is known as the melodious Awakener, and is installed in a dormitory room in the lower quadrangle.

The ingenuity of two undergraduates was combined to construct the Awakener (patent pending), which we will endeavor to describe. The inventors fastened a stiff piece of wire to the alarm key on the back of a cheap alarm clock, detaching the bell beforehand. When the alarm goes off in the morning the wire hits the bait on a mousetrap, the trap snaps back and pulls a cord attached to the starter on a phonograph. And the phonograph, wound the night-before, is set for action. In a few minutes the strains of "Happy Days Are Here Again" fill the room, awakening the occupants.

We're not so sure about the name of the record, but we presume that they use that one for week-ends. Or maybe "The Moon is Iow."

Buc

The *Buccaneer* has a nice cover.

Adieu

Oft nominated for oblivion, this column heeds the call. We return your trade name, Mr. Sullivan, as *Our Times* ducks the final cabbage. Gone, now may we be speedily forgotten.

Life and Letters

By Edith Harbour

EXAMS are in the offing. Why are exams? Why do students periodically submit themselves to the mental anguish of cramming? Why do professors or their underpaid readers suffer both mental and physical fatigue in the matter of grading papers? This matter is of the greatest importance. Columns are devoted to the subject yearly. Editorial writers wax eloquent in the cause of abolition. Psychologists engage in extensive research work in this field, for letters home grow thin and plaintive. Fair damsels grow likewise. Deep, dark circles appear under eyes formerly bright

and shining. All for grades. And there are grades for all—ranging from A's to F's. Examinations are not a fair test of a student's knowledge or ability. Even the professors admit that a mere mark of distinction such as "pass" and "failure" would be better than a graduated grading system. But exams, medieval though they may be in some respects, have a purpose. Yes, indeed. If it weren't for exams there couldn't be any of those delightful little *Boners* and *More Boners* collections. Just think what a dismal world this would be if a student had never written that Queen Elizabeth sat on a thorn longer than any other English sovereign, that Bacchus was a famous Greek bootlegger, that William Jennings Bryan was "the biggest and best show on earth," that the vast western reaches of these United States were settled by a transpiration of sturdy pioneers across the Appalachians, and that Mike Angel entered the pearly gates because he was a famous Florentine painter (those last three are from my private and yet unpublished collection). The way to avoid boners, of course, is to smoke a certain brand of tobacco. The way to avoid exams might be to have the TAR HEEL conduct a poll on the subject of abolition or retention of the time-honored custom.

ADS are funny. "Nature in the raw is seldom mild" is a slogan which advertises a brand of cigarettes supposedly somewhat milder than competing brands. These ads are generally adorned with some artist's conception of nature in the raw. Sometimes the bones of dinosaurs are depicted. At other times a ferocious wild beast is crouched ready to spring upon an unsuspecting prey. But the best one I've seen yet is entitled, alliteratively enough, "The Pillage of Paris." Two strong men are shown bearing away the supine body of a young woman with flowing tresses. She is supposed to be an unwilling captive. Turn the picture upside down and look at the self-satisfied smile which plays about her lips—nature in the raw is seldom mild.

ALL the world loves a holiday. The Romans may not have originated the custom but they had their holidays, and we of today emulate the habit of those who dwelt on the banks of the yellow Tiber. If exams come can Christmas holidays be far behind? Here's wishing for one and all, including Tiny Tim, jappy holidays!

PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS

SPEAKING the CAMPUS MIND

Touche!

The denunciation of the TAR HEEL's dramatic critic in yesterday's TAR HEEL which purports to represent the sober views of the campus ventured the highly original and humorous suggestion that the critic's name was drawn from a hat. The letter then proceeds with some examples of dramatic criticism that beggar the attempts of George Jean Nathan. How they make our own poor critic feel can be imagined.

It does not seem quite sportsmanlike for H. K. to attack the poor work of the TAR HEEL's critic while at the same time making a veiled bid in the shape of highly superior work for the post of the man he shows unfit for the position. It is probable, however, that disgusted with the work of bunglers he has determined to step in and take the duties upon himself in one fell swoop and not go through the formality of having his name drawn from a hat.

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plays of that locality, one from the east for eastern plays, a man from Georgia for the Georgia plays and a man from New York for the New York plays. In this way many would be given a chance and we would have criticisms from capable men. And for the plays of universal scope and import who but H. K. himself a man whom we could point to with pride as really fit and chosen for his ability as a critic of critics.—J.F.A.

Second-hand American tires are being exported to Serbia and Latvia to be made into footwear. Chiropodists over there ought to be kept pretty busy treating tired feet.—*Philadelphia Daily News*.

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