

THE BATTALION

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HAZING.

The News is of the opinion that the inquiry that has been conducted at Austin concerning hazing at the Agricultural and Mechanical College, is nothing more nor less than the gratuitous raising of a storm in a teacup. Not all of us have had the pleasure and the privilege of attending a college or a university, but The News ventures to say that, of those who have, something like ninety-nine per cent are reading the reports of this investigation with mingled feelings of disgust and amusement. The whole question is, after all, so trivial in comparison with the weightier problems which the Legislature has before it as to cause the average citizen of the State, we think, to regard with fidgety disapproval the mere consideration of the matter.

"Boys will be boys," is an old expression, and yet it is one that we would do well to ponder over occasionally. No one can ever hope or expect to make angels out of a group of virile and energetic young men. Inquiries and legislation to the contrary notwithstanding, hazing can never be wholly abolished at the Agricultural and Mechanical College or at any other college in the United States. Furthermore, The News thinks it a good omen and a fortunate one that it can not be done away with.

Every one who has gone to college knows that there is nothing malicious in the practice of hazing. In the large majority of cases, the hazed enjoys his hazing to just as great an extent as do those who administer it. A spanking with a wooden paddle does, of course, hurt to some extent, and yet the boy who goes to college and who is not the recipient of some such attentions is disappointed. He knows, as all students know, that the popular freshmen are the ones who get paddled the most. Those who are left strictly alone are usually not of the "goodfellow" type, and the neglect of the upper classment to haze them is a silent sign that they are not eligible to the ranks of congeniality and good-fellowship.

A certain amount of good-natured hazing is good for the recipient and good for the college at which it is practiced. Hazing is a form of initiation. The practice comes from one of the fundamental wellsprings of human nature. It is practiced in many places other than in colleges. The "horseplay" of the various fraternal orders is hazing. The "roughing" of the old-time cowpuncher who joined a new outfit was hazing. The ordeal which a cub reporter on a newspaper is put through by his fellow-reporters and his city editor in order to "try him out" is hazing. Hazing is, in short, an almost universal institution, and its practice may be traced back to the customs and manners even of our primeval ancestors. It is, in the last analysis, merely the testing out of the "spunk" and the mettle of a man, and unfortunate is he who fails to pass the test, or who is considered too far out of the pale to be subjected to it.

If the Legislature is going to investigate hazing, why not let the inquiry extend to all the walks of life? It can then close up shop at Austin and spend the rest of its life at the job.

The testimony of a former student at the Agricultural and Mechanical College, J. C. Allen of Mart, a youth of 19 years old, is, we think, more nearly indicative of the normal attitude of the average "fish" or freshman, than has been the testimony of some previous witnesses who appeared before the committee. Allen testified that while a student he was hazed in the manner described by previous witnesses. His first hazing was about thirty minutes after his arrival. A bunch of boys from his home used a "fish killer" on him. The "fish killers" were not used in an inhuman or cruel manner. Sometimes they would sting a little, but he did not mind it. The sophs forced him to sing to them occasionally, and recite poetry. He sang "Home, Sweet Home," and "Until We Meet Again." He was whipped about once a day during his stay at the college, he said, and became used to it. He took it as a joke, and believed a freshman had as much fun out of it as any one else. He left A. and M., he said, with kindly feelings for the college. He had never known of any student who left on account of cruel treatment by upper classmen. When he went to A. and M., he said, he expected to be hazed and would have been disappointed if he had not got it. Whippings were given with boards, bayonets and belts.

Cross-questioned by Cullen Thomas, the witness said that he had been treated courteously by the college authorities. He had not reported the hazing incidents to them because he did not feel like it. The sophs were never angry when they whipped the freshmen, he explained. The freshmen also took the whippings good-naturedly, as a rule. A few of the boys probably carried hazing too far, but he believed on the whole hazing was a good thing, as it resulted in friendship, sportsmanship and fellowship.—The Dallas News.

AN ALUMNUS PUBLISHES OPINION ON A. AND M. HAZING.

The A. and M. Hazing Incident.

To the Editor of The Post:

McKinney, Texas, February 19.—Notwithstanding the experience of the Legislature of 1913 in its attempt to abolish hazing at the Agricultural and Mechanical College, which resulted in the expulsion of 500 students, in the disruption of the college, and in an effort on the part of its enemies to move the institution to Austin, we are again witnessing a legislative investigation, along the same lines. If history repeats itself, nothing but harm to the college can come of it and possibly another law against hazing will be passed.

I realize that members of the legislature are driven on by grossly exaggerated charges of brutal and outrageous treatment of certain students of the Agricultural and Mechanical College and not withstanding the psychology of hazing, in a large military school, they as well as large numbers of people throughout the State are taking the matter very seriously.

Now it is not my intention in this article to defend the practice of hazing, but I do want to try to show the boys' side of it.

During my four years' stay at the A. and M., I never saw a single instance of brutal or outrageous hazing of any student. While it has been a number of years since my student days, I have kept in close touch with conditions at the College, through numerous visits and personal contact with members of the student body and I have not heard of a single case of hazing that could be characterized as outrageous or brutal, and I firmly believe that if the testimony could be taken of the hundreds of alumni of the College, many of whom occupy the highest positions in the business and professional world, their testimony would be the same as mine.

What is termed as hazing has been practiced to a greater or less degree by the students of the A. and M. since its foundation. The main features consist of spanking freshmen, making them carry upper classmen's trunks, sing, dance and recite poetry. These indignities, if one sees fit to call them that, are administered in a spirit of fun and comradeship, com-

mon in red-blooded boys of this nation, and not in the spirit of wild Comanche Indians, bent on the torture of some hated enemy, as some seem to believe.

The college spirit of loyalty of the A. and M. alumni and student body is unsurpassed. If they were brutally and outrageously hazed, as some people seem to think, how is one to account for the great love they bear their alma mater.

It has been my observation that there are two types of boys. One is a boy who does not get along with the student body at A. and M. One is a boy who believes he is better than his fellows and that he is too good to be subjected to the pranks which it has been the custom of years to practice on freshmen. This kind of a boy is usually a mollycoddle and tattletale and naturally makes himself unpopular.

Another type is a boy who gives way to homesickness and complains of hazing to his parents, hoping to get their consent to leave school.

I feel that I speak advisedly when I say that it is from these two types and their parents or friends that most of the complaints of hazing come.

From the thousands of other red-blooded, real 100 per cent American boys, who have attended the College no one has ever heard a word of complaint. They feel nothing but affection for old A. and M. and her traditions.

Then why because of the complaints of a few boys who on account of their disposition, are unable to adapt themselves to the student life at A. and M., should the College be subjected to periodical legislative investigation such as has almost wrecked the institution in time past?

It is a matter of my personal knowledge that President Bizzell, Major Ike Ashburn, several regular army non-commissioned officers, as well as the entire staff of cadet officers of A. and M. are doing all in their power to stop hazing, so what can the legislature do that they are not doing?

It is very easy to say, stop 1800 boys cooped up on a campus for months from playing what they consider harmless pranks on each other, but doing it is a different matter.

The government has been unable to stop it at West Point or the Naval Academy. The State of Virginia has been unable to stop it at V. M. I. So what right have we to expect our Texas boys at A. and M. to be different from other American boys? I'll admit that they are not angels. Neither are they devils.

If I should be called upon by the investigating committee to say in my opinion whether hazing as practiced at A. and M. College is good or harmful for boys, I should say that it is good, because it teaches a boy to meet strangers under all conditions. If he has any inclination to be snobbish or a cad, it soon takes it out of him. He becomes democratic in his ideas and is made to realize that, what a boy is, and not what he has, really counts. At A. and M. everybody is on the same footing. The uniforms cover the rich and poor alike.

F. D. PERKINS.

—Houston Post, February 23, 1921.

AS A MATTER OF PRIDE.

According to college papers the "short skirt" and dancing "evils" are rapidly becoming noticeable at the various educational institutions over the country. Whether this is due to the initiative of some over-critical editor whose comments started the wave of articles through the college publications, or whether the numerous articles appearing have ample grounds for complaint, we are not prepared to state. Nevertheless, whatever foundation such articles may have, it is a matter of pride with us that at no time and from no source have criticisms unfavorable to the college dances come to our ears. As for short skirts—we have nothing to say. Spiral leggings and leather "puts" are all that greet the College Station eye with anything like regularity.

A REMINDER.

For those who have not yet written the "regular fellow" letter to his dad this week, we wish to recall the fact that this is the week designated over the country as "Father and Son Week." Every son who is away from home and the greatest man he knows of, his dad, should take the time to write an especially long letter to his father. Tell him of the trivial things you usually neglect. Take him into your confidence and open up with your plans, interests, and work. He will appreciate it more than you will ever realize.

THE L. S. U. GAMES.

For the first time this season the Aggies witnessed the defeat of their fighting Farmers on home territory. The effect was marvelous as the score on the succeeding night indicated. Defeat seems to instill the old fight more deeply than ever in Farmer teams. The loss of a game brings pep and spirit of the corps to its highest point. The "Tigers" have the better end of the scoring this season, yet we enjoy contests with them to the fullest. L. S. U. has good teams, and teams that fight clean and hard. It is a pleasure to meet them on field or court. Their quintet is the best that has ever played on the local court this season. We salute the "Tigers".

THE LOVING ARE THE DARING.

James J. Montague.

(Dancing is a regular part of the training as West Point.—And should be at A. and M.)

When a gallant cadet whizzes by with his girl

To the jazz's unrhythmical beat.

Or joins in the dizzy, bewildering whirl

With shimmying shoulders and feet,

And only at intervals pauses to puff

In the course of a hard dancing night,

Don't think that he's pulling unsoldierly stuff,

For that's how they teach him to fight.

The lad who would stand undismayed

In a trench

Or calmly go over the top

Has often been noticed to shudder and blench

While dragging a Jane through a hop.

The mind that can master the intricate dope

That the writers on strategy plot

Too often is sadly unable to cope

With the one-step, the glide or the trot.

Wild war's worst alarms have never been known

A veteran dancer to stun;

Cadets who can skip to a braying trombone

Never flinch at the roar of a gun.

And leading a wallflower out on the floor

Who is lacking in litheness and beauty,

Implants in the earnest young student of war,

Unswerving devotion to duty.

And so, though you fancy that dancing's a sport

Unsuited to soldierly deeds—

Like crushing a salient or storming a fort—

It's quite what an officer needs.

Cadets who for four years through the maze of the dance

Have side-stepped and eddied and whirled,

If ever a mixup should give them a chance

Will easily lick the whole world.

THE SLEUTH.

Now Barnes and Scudder are two nice little men,

They always get home by half-past ten.

But what they do, and where they go,

Is something we all should know.

Now, I am on to their little scheme;

Each night they borrow a snug limousine.

And each in his turn takes the driver's seat,

To roll up after his lady so sweet.

Now Barnes has a line that makes 'em all fall;

And Scudder wasn't built to be lonesome at all—

So we watched the speedometer for two hours or more,

And it showed the miles they traveled was not quite four.

Now this same night we saw them again,

And late as it was it was only half-past ten;

Their appearance was dirty, and their countenance sad—

They kept mumbling about the hard luck they'd had.

Now these men are proud and silent as soup;

And if they knew I saw they'd knock me for a loop—

But I was there and by the light so dim,

I watched them change tires and come home on the rim.

RIFLE TEAM AT TEXAS.

At a meeting of several students of Texas University a rifle team was organized and officers elected. This team will meet the A. and M. Rifle team some time in the spring. Plans were made to meet some of the local Austin teams during the season. Before the war, the athletic department gave "T's" to members on the team and an effort is being made to have the custom revived.

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