



Dedication

Not to that greatest of practical philosophers, P. T. Barnum, who, so the legends tell us, said, "There's a million born every minute," and proved it, but to the multitudinous souls—the millions without whom Barnum never could have proved his theory, are these pages dedicated. The great American gave his life over to the proof of his contention that the people like to be humbugged, but have not we, the countless millions, all consciously or unconsciously dedicated large portions of our lives to the same end? Who among us is not being fooled today? And who among us does not like it? Let him cast the first ripe cabbage at the humble writer of the pages to come. And remember as you read, fellow dupes, that if these pages arouse your anger, we did not mean them to be taken seriously, and on the other hand, if you accept them wholly in a spirit of levity, neither was this their purpose. It is to show you that you are being fooled that we write these pages. And in believing that we could convince you of this, we are fooling ourselves. Remember as we take you through the big show that every clown is a potential Pagliacci, and that—

*"The friar will often play the fool,
And the fool will play the friar."*





The Big Show

We shall never forget the day when, armed with a check-book, a high school class pin and arrayed in the very latest thing from our home town's leading haberdashery, we made our first advance on the state's Pierian Spring with the determination to drink deep. And it was much the same as the first time we ever went to a circus.



The Whole Thing is a Titanic Show.

Life is a circus. And most of us are clowns. Whatever there may be in a university, we cannot but admit that there is a certain amount of life therein; and then completing the syllogism to the taste of even the most exacting of Dean Leaphart's crew, we may say: Therefore, college is a circus.

There are, too, many other instances besides the existence of Elias M. P. Keeley and "Judge" Nagle, that the whole thing is a titanic show. And we can never be sure whether the thing is for us or on us.

Do you remember, dear reader, that epoch-making day when you wandered up the avenue to take up the mystic scepter of knowledge which was to make you fulfill the predictions of the old fogies back home? Remember how, when you took second place in the Remote county essay contest, they all said you would make your mark yet, b'gosh?



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We shall never (unless the prohibition amendment is repealed) forget that first day. We moped blithely up the avenue, wondering at the noisy houses with the Chinese laundry signs on them. On the porch of one of them there was a little group of lads, singing to the tune of a mandolin one of them was trying to play. We didn't know just what to make of the apprais-



A line of one hundred and fifty flappers.

ing sort of manner in which they "took their gappin's" at us as we passed, but then, we had much to learn.

Finally, some one steered us to the main entrance of the shebang, and we got on the end of a line of about one hundred and fifty flappers and striplings. The line lead to desk No. 1, where the first formalities were to commence.

Ah! Little do we remember today as we sit behind our sauerkraut and suds reading this book, of the intrigues and embroglios that were being set for us by the Greeks. The Greeks? Yes, you remember them. They're the lads who wore the big badges and always bailed each





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other out of the city jail in the good old days after their shoes had come in contact with too much brass tubing. There are eleven clans of them, you know, and each is the only real one on the campus. Six of them specialized in lads who had athletic records, money, fussing ability, or appetites for "red licker"; and the other five competed, behind barrages of catty remarks, for the right to hang their badges on blossoming high school Circean artists. These, dear friends, are the side shows in the circus of learning. We recall even yet the time when



Birth place, United States or Missouri?

we went to the circus in our infancy, and the smooth-tongued side show barker convinced us that we had "plenty of time to see the big show afterwards," and sold us one of his tickets. When we came out and were ready to take in the main event, we discovered that the menagerie tent was being taken down and——. But this is neither here nor there, as the feller says, so "Vesti la giubba" (on with the play)!



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Well, we edged right up into line, and then started to look about us. Soon we were approached by an extremely friendly young man who introduced himself and insisted that we come "down to the house" for dinner. We glowed all over at the hospitality of the place and assured him we would be there.

At last we got to the table. We signed a card and were promptly given a handful of cards and papers. After finding a secluded spot and examining the propaganda, we found that all



We glowed all over at the hospitality of the place.

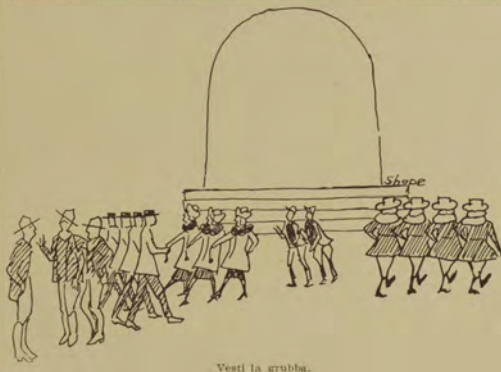
we had to do was fill out all the twelve sections of the registration card, which was about four feet long unfolded, find all our prospective instructors, and get their signatures. After this was finished we were to return to table No. 2 for some more. We spent an hour or so filling out the blanks—answering such inquiries as, birthplace, if in the United States or Missouri; favorite salad dressing, and hunch as to the probable winner of the world's series pennant.

We shall refrain from going further into the revolting details of the registration here. Let it be enough to say that after some hours, we finally found out what we wanted—and got something else.



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That evening we had to register again. There was a dance at the gym, which they called a mixer. We were advised to attend the rastle and get in good with the faculty. Here we lined up again and registered pleasure with admirable hypocrisy while we shook hands with five hundred people whose names we didn't hear when they were introduced to us. Some hours later we went home in deep disgust, thoroughly convinced that we had had a swell time and that we were going to like college immensely. During the course of the evening's torture we prom-



ised a few more people that we would come to smokers, dances, etc. Already we were gathering the impression that our fame had not been confined to Remote county alone, but had been state, or perhaps even, nation-wide. They must have awaited our coming for years.

There is one marked difference between our circus and Barnum's. If you can get past the side show barkers in his show, get your ticket and get under the big top, they let you alone until you come out. But in the great show of learning they follow you right into the big arena and try to cover you with badges and ribbons showing that you prefer them to all other clans in the universe.





The sweet torture lasts at least two weeks. During this time you are thoroughly convinced that you are the last word in organic evolution—the nearest approach to perfection known to the realms of science. Then comes pledge day, and you capitulate to one of the side shows. Your attitude toward the institution has changed, and the grand old quotation, “Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring,” is discarded for “Drink, for you know not why you go, nor where.”

There is an old saying about side shows that it costs two bits to get in and five dollars to get out. The minute you got into the side show that made the best impression on your youthful



S. O. S. that night.

vanity—remember, friends?—you were told that the old brothers were your superiors, and that they should be treated with respect due their stations. You were also informed that the healthiest thing for you to do would be to appear at the house Saturday morning, (no, they were not giving a breakfast party in your honor), and help clear away the debris accumulated during the rushing season, when the brothers were too busy entertaining to sweep under the beds. From then on to the day when you entered the sacred conclave and became one of the wearers of the cryptic emblem of the tribe, no words were wasted to rid your infantile intellect of the pre-pledging hallucination that you were a respectable human being. Then came the reign of terror, the oath of brotherhood, and you pinned on your vest, with a complacent smile,



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the insignia which told the world that you were no longer an ordinary human being, but had transcended the terrestrial mass and become one of the chosen few.

But we are getting a little previous. As we remember, many other things of more or less importance happened before we were able to wear the sign of the clan. It was about four weeks after the show had started. We came blithely home to the house one afternoon and were handed a harmless looking envelope containing a yellow slip. We asked one of the older mem-



Examinations are given occasionally.

bers what it meant, and besides it wasn't yellow at all, just plain white. He looked it over and just said, "Bend over a minute." The timber swung lustily, and we had learned something else. A yellow slip meant that we were dragging down the tribe's average and were liable to be nosed out by some of the other inferior Greeks, which would be a disgrace, indeed.

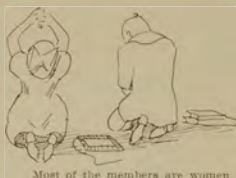
Examinations are given occasionally. The purpose of the examination is to find out what students have the best memories, have done the most cramming, or are the most clever in the subtle art of cribbage. Those who do not come under at least one of the above categories are





hopelessly doomed. Then there are some who, it is said, have such a profound respect for the opinions of the textbook authors that they consult the books during exams to prevent an accidental conflict of opinion with them.

One day we were met on the campus by a lad who informed us that there would be S. O. S. that night. We told him that we had sent ours that afternoon. But we couldn't help wondering why they set any special dates for S. O. S. When we are broke, we thought, we can't wait for someone to tell us when to send the distress call.



Most of the members are women.

Early in our college life we heard about an organization known as Tappa Kau, or something of the sort. This is just another name for Shark's club. Most of the members are women. Many theories have been advanced as to the reason for shortage of men in the group. Some say it is modesty on the part of the men, some attribute it to temperament, and still others to the fact that Kelley's pool parlor is not a co-educational institution. We can't make any certain assertion. We never were very familiar with the organization.

It wasn't so very long before we began to realize that Kappa Tau was looming further and further in the offing. Our literary labors were returned to us with marks carelessly strewn





upon them. We were indignant and wished that we had remained in high school, where real talent was recognized. It was very much to our distaste that we were requested to weed down our vocabularies, which were the envy of our contemporaries in the good old days. It was with regret and a longing to tell the profs that they didn't know a good thing when they saw it, that we thought of how often we had been asked if we had "eaten a dictionary." Now our effusions were labeled "wordy, verbose, impossible," and upon one or two occasions "rank,"

Eats Books Giant



Observations that we gleaned from the study of English.

which we didn't think very refined. However, we tolerated this rough language, because by this time we had discovered that all professors have their peculiarities and that some of them maintained their standings by being deliberately shocking. There were others who felt that an intimate knowledge of William Cullen Bryant was the essential thing in improving the intellect of the young. Still others thought that an ability to define realism, which was being much talked of, constituted a true bent to higher learning. We'll admit that we never succeeded in defining the word, but though this inability was one of the things that pushed Kappa Tau further and further away, we stubbornly maintained that the prof himself could do no better than we. He only thought he could, and since he was the doctor, figuratively speaking, we were the





goats. All these were observations that we gleaned from a study of English. We had many similar reactions to the dope that was peddled by the other profs.

It doesn't take long in the big show to get wise to one's self. The average bright young man or woman soon learns which side of the cake is frosted, so to speak, and sets his or her sails accordingly.

To be sure, one has to designate a preference for something. He gives a lot of consideration to this, too, for he wants to pick the line that is easiest. Some things he can't avoid and he gets these over with just as soon as possible. He buncoes the profs as much as possible. This

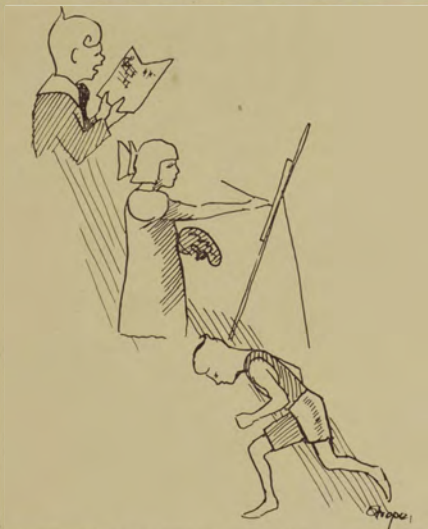


buncoing takes many forms. He puts each prof under close observation and finds out what his "meat and drink" are, or, rather, what are "meat and drink" to him. We found that some of our profs were fond of telling stories. We claimed a sense of humor, but often could not see the joke. It was only when we discovered what a terrible effect it has on the prof's attitude toward you not to laugh at his witticisms and his jokes that we began doing this. Laughing at jokes that were not jokes is what we mean. You did this by waiting for the psychological moment. If you didn't wait for this, results might be fatal. We got this "down" to such an extent that we could really enjoy the professor's jokes, even when we knew them to be non-existent. Another way of "getting by" was by sitting in the front row. The great tendency, you know, is to sit in the back row. We found that the highbrows sat in the front row so that they could the better absorb the words of wisdom that fell like pearls cast before swine (excluding the front row). By further deduction we found that the prof thought you a wise bird if you sat in the front row and never asked you any questions. A good plan, too, was



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ed the information to confirm the point of which to learn one thing and then, quite as if you want you were not quite sure, you sprung your trap. It was a trap, because the prof thought you not only had read, but given very serious thought to your assignment. In scientific circles you



If you can't carry a tune, join the Glee club. You'll have the "right spirit." If you break your neck, finish the game and be a hero.

raved over the odor and importance of some chemical concoction or you enthused over the beauty of a puff ball or a mass of green slime, or you talked wisely about the pseudo parenchyma or something like that. Always these tactics resulted in your prof thinking that you were a real



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scholar. He might not think that you knew very much, but he'd be sure to think you were interested, and "interest is what we want," in the words of the profs.

One thing you had to take an interest in, and that was athletics. If you didn't turn out for all the games, even if you got pneumonia, you were a "piker," which is the next worst thing to



If you got pneumonia or lost your voice, the greater glory.

being a grind. If you did get pneumonia, the greater the glory for you. You gained the admiration of your fellow students and got out of a lot of classes. Of course, you had a lot of work to make up, but then was the time you could make use of the grinds. You flattered them and told them how much you admired them and how much you wished you had an intellect. You wound up the palaver by borrowing their note books or by boldly, if inconsiderately, requesting their assistance in covering the lost ground. Your conscience didn't prick you



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in the least for this course of action. Grinds must have some purpose in the world, and you couldn't see the use of letting them go to waste. Moreover, the human spark that was left in most of these poor, misguided creatures, who actually believed—and adhered to the belief—that one came to college to learn something, responded to your advances and brought a glow of



The animals who perform their little tricks willingly get all the credit.

transient happiness to their shallow cheeks and study-dimmed eyes.

And speaking of going to all the games—foot, basket and baseball—we found out that the next best thing to catching pneumonia was shouting yourself hoarse. We did this with great gusto and were given our reward in the announcement that we had “pep.” Pep is another thing that you must have when you go to college. For the most part it consists of horning



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into everything. You must go in for athletics, dramatics, art, glee club and all that sort of thing. If you can't carry a tune when you join the glee club, so much the better. You will get credit for having the "right spirit." And in demonstrating "pep" it is important to do everything as if your life depended on it. If you happen to be participating in a game of any kind and

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Some go out of the sawdust ring of knowledge.

you break your neck or your leg and yet finish the game, you are a hero, and nobody ever saw such "pep" as you have. Pep for the majority, however, is evinced in shouting one's self hoarse at every student activity. Anybody can do it, and the mere fact that there are a few who consider the ligaments of their throats of more importance than audible joy in a touchdown makes it all the better for those who will do it.

They are the "regular guys" and the others are the "pikers."

We might connect up here with the "Big Idea" and get back to the circus by saying that the animals who perform their little tricks willingly get all the credit, while there is nothing but contempt for those who won't jump through the ring at the risk of being singed by the circle of fire, which is part of the trick. We hope you get us. If you don't bear with us and think of us as the prof, who tells the story, which must be laughed at whether "we get him" or not.

After four or five years, if you have been fortunate enough to stay in the institution that long, you are given the sacred sheepskin with the inscription on it which says that you are educated. With this in your hand, the conquest of the world is a simple matter.

It is the sad fate of many, however, that they never reach this stage of the game. These are the erring souls who stay too long in a side show and find the big tent coming down when they





get out. The departure of the student is usually preceded by a volley of yellow slips, and later by a visit to the office of the dean of men or women. Sometimes two visits are indulged in before the letter is sent to the student advising him that, as his university work seems to be interfering with his social affairs, it would be advisable to discontinue the former.

And so it goes in the sawdust ring of knowledge. Many are called, but few get the degree. And who can say which has been humbugged most, the one who is ejected early in the affray with sophistication, or the one who stays and sees it through, only to find that he has spent four years away from the world he was preparing to enter? And what is the difference?—

*“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.”*





Convocation

(With double apologies to H. G. Merriam.)

Convocation! Convocation! Convocation!
Things to hear,
Things to say,
Things to know,
But they fear
It won't pay,
So won't go.
Convocation! Convocation! Convocation!

—Willie Croak.

Is This Pasture Intelligence?

I've never been guilty of kissing a cow:
When it comes to such pleasures I strike.
But the girl with a mouth of that odor, I vow,
Has the kine of a breath that I like.

—Otto B. Schött.





Sunset

Oh, beautiful! I never have laid eyes on
A more gorgeous or magnificent scene
Than the sun dropping back of the horizon,
Like a penny in a slot machine.

—Otto B. Schott.

Virtue Rewarded

There once was a great Brooklyn preacher,
Told the hen, "You're a wonderful creature."
The hen, just for that,
Laid an egg in his hat,
And thus did the Henry Ward Beecher.

—Plato Beans, or I. Felix Austed.





What Is It All About—A Ruby Yacht

By Insydious.

To university, though scarcely knowing
What we shall gather while young years are
 flowing,
We come as children, with our minds quite free
From thought, and leave with reason faintly
 glowing.

A moment's halt—a momentary taste
Of learning. Ah! how vainly do we waste
Our youth in quest of knowledge—"This a dupe,
Scarce written in us, then by death erased.

Some for the glories gained in school, and some
Yearn for the triumphs of the life to come;
Ah, take the joys, and let the learning go,
Nor fear the day when you'll be on the bum.

J. B. doth sit and write, and having writ,
Writes on, nor all your piety and wit
Could lure him back to cancel one mere flunk,
Or even get from him a D for it.

Alike to those who for today prepare,
Or at the morrow's tests do vainly stare,
A trombone from the festive Elite cries,
"Fools, take your reward, it's here—not there!"





Waste not the precious hours in vain pursuit
Of knowledge. Better squeeze the ripened fruit,
Ferment the juice, and lift it to your lips,
Nor sigh that your mad song will soon be mute.

We think some seeds of learning here to sow,
But somehow (curse 'em) they don't seem to
grow—

And if they do, it brings not happiness,
'Tis tommyrot! Come, to the dance let's go.

Come, my beloved, to the dizzy fling;
Reflection there is not the proper thing,
Leave learning to the sages—greasy grinds!
He that would ponder hath no time to sing.

A book of "papers" underneath the bough,
A sack of Durham, a pail of suds, and thou,
Sweet dreams of ham and eggs and applejack—
And love! Were this not paradise enow?

I sometimes think there ne'er so yellow grows
A slip as where J. B. the black ink throws,
That every letter that Doc. Jesse writes
Portends some evil—still one never knows.





The Garden of Nicotine

By Charles Awgowan Sideburne.

I am tired of labs and classes
That we attend like sheep,
And goofs with horn-rimmed glasses,
And the copy-books they keep.
I am weary of credit hours,
Of the profs with all their powers;
Sweet erudition sours,
Like everything but sleep.

I am not sure of passing,
But flunks are fairly sure.
I wish I'd cut out jazzing,
And that my cuts were fewer.
I'm feeling quite forgetful,
I know I need a netful
Of credits, or a hatful—
But Learning's lost her lure.

From too much steady fussing,
From time and cash set free,
We thank, while softly cussing
Whatever gods there be,
That co-eds aren't more clever,
That school won't last forever,
That still, with slight endeavor,
One *can* go on a spree.

—*Stealthy Steve.*



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He Wasn't There

Buen Fusser
Aint at the dance—
He left the iron
On his pants.

Nice N. Slick,
He wasn't there—
He had his roommate
Cut his hair.



Absent too was
Willie Doze—
One of the brothers
Wore his clothes.

He wasn't there,
The Campus flirt—
The Chinese laundry
Kept his shirt.





Harry was missed
While the jazz was played—
He lost his only
Razor blade.

Leonard wasn't
There by far—
She lived 'way out—
He missed the car.

—Willie Croak.





“Wusga”

Ah, my friends, there's a word! Wallow it over in your mouth till your tongue burns. Wusga! Its insidious meaning is now known to all who have made the pilgrimage across the burning alkali to the state's spigot of learning. The word “wusga” will go down in the annals of the history of the universe second only to such immortal names as normalcy, “one-eleven,” democracy and homebrew.

Wusga is a synonym for emancipation. Wusga means freedom, wild and sweet; and at the same time responsibility, magnanimous and tolerant. With the popularity of the word on the campus came the realization that the weak sex had arisen in its glorified dignity and decided to paddle its own canoe across the stretches of murky blackness which lie between the campus lights. And when the men realized this, they rejoiced and became “jocund with the fruitful grape” in honor of the great unshackling.

Wusga is government—gentle and mild, yet firm and resolute as Mount Sentinel. It is the realized dream—the fulfillment of the age-old desire of human beings to rule each other. Wusga means government of the governed by the governors.

Let us picture this latest edition of democracy in action. Enthroned at the head of the table of justice sits Helen the Unhindered, the exalted and awesome dower of discipline. Around the table sit the trusty lieutenants of the order, awaiting with bated breath a word from the ruler.

At length she stirs on her throne, and the assembled know that she is about to speak.

“Comrades!” she shouted, tossing aside with a careless gesture a copy of the Whiz Bang, “we have grave and sinister things to discuss here today. There are rumors of great evil in the air.” A sigh, like the gentle breath of a typhoon, escapes the astounded sisters, and they lean nearer to catch the words of the leader.

“It has just come to mine ears,” continues the exalted one, her voice a-quiver with frolicsome sincerity, “that there are girls in this university who chew Spearmint. But I am proud to say that I do not believe this. I cannot believe it. To accept such an astounding assertion as a fact would be to cast too great an obloquy upon my sex. Still we must be vigilant, and find who the culprits are. We must find and punish those who would discredit the fair name of our university.”





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At this point two of the high officials of the circle, Sadie the Scandal, and Lil Christensen, sacred keeper of the dumbbells, leap to their feet in indignation.

"Ah, your majesty!" they bellow in unison, "the rumor cannot be true. As representatives of the wind-swept Fjords of the Baltic, we are prepared to swear that the price of Copenhagen has not arisen one cent. There could be no reason for such a change."

"Tis well," breathes the ruler. "Be seated, faithful ones."

"But what of the affectionate dance?" interpolates Letsga Hoem, waving a book of hymns above her head. "I have just learned, your highness, that it was glorified in sacred song. Surely it must be not sinful. Listen to this." And she reads, "I shall meet Him face to face."

"The meeting is adjourned!" roars the president. "Boy, page the sub-social committee and the sixteen slippery sleuths!"



