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# THE FRATERNITY *and* THE COLLEGE

*Being a Series of Papers Dealing With  
Fraternity Problems*

BY

THOMAS ARKLE CLARK

*Dean of Men, University of Illinois*



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## INTRODUCTION

I knew a man once who had never been off the prairies of Illinois who wrote a prize essay on mountain scenery. He got some of his facts from reading and supplied the rest from his imagination. The theories and principles contained in the papers which make up this little book, however, come from an intimate and an almost hourly experience with fraternities and fraternity men covering a period of more than twenty years. For a time my experience was only such as any onlooker without authority or official position might have, but in recent years I have come into relation with these men in a very close official way.

“College Spirit” was printed in the *Illinois Magazine*; “Fraternity Finances” and “The Brothers Who Live in Town” appeared in the *Alpha Tau Omega Palm*; “The Fraternity and Its Alumni,” “The Fraternity and Its Underclassmen,” “The Fraternity and Scholarship,” “Horse Play and Rough House at Initiations,” and “Extra-fraternity Organizations,” have been published in *Banta's Greek Exchange*. The other papers are new, and they are all presented in this form with the hope that they may help in some way to a better understanding of fraternities and fraternity problems.

Urbana, Illinois,  
December, 1915.



## THE FRATERNITY AND THE COLLEGE

When a young fellow asks me to advise him whether or not he should become a fraternity man, or having himself decided that question in a general way wants me to suggest the suitable organization for him, I feel thrust into about the same position as I should be in were I asked to decide whether or not he should marry or were I delegated to choose one from a number of possible candidates for the proposed partnership. Since I have been asked at one time or another to solve both of these matrimonial dilemmas for my student friends, perhaps I should not hesitate to tackle so serious a problem as is that presented by the fraternity.

I believe that the college Greek-letter fraternity is an institution that has come to stay, and that on the whole it is a good one. Some state legislatures are attempting to decide the question as to whether or not Greek-letter fraternities shall be allowed in certain institutions, but this decision is properly a matter entirely for the educational institutions themselves. It is in no small sense an educational matter which belongs distinctly in the hands of the faculties and no more concerns state legislatures than the question as to whether students should be allowed to keep automobiles or bull dogs, or whether they should

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be allowed to board at lunch counters or to live in private dormitories.

— It is a natural tendency for young people, and especially for young men, to join more or less closely into groups for the furtherance and the development of mutual interests, and it is a tendency which we should expect and foster in college as elsewhere. Far back in my youth in the country neighborhood in which I lived it was the habit of a special group of boys with whom I associated to meet at more or less regular intervals under the "Iron Bridge" or up in the hay loft to discuss plans and projects of mutual interest. We, too, had our secrets and our signs almost as serious and as significant as are those of the college fraternity today. I knew by the peculiar note which he uttered as he passed our door when Bill Boys was going home at night, and I learned to convey unwritten volumes across the school room to Taylor Curtis through the mystic symbols of our order. Even today, at middle age, I have my pals, and we meet together at intervals and are bound together by bonds not unlike those which gripped me to those companions of my childhood. In a similar way, though now in a more tangible and a more businesslike way, the members of a college fraternity are bound. If the young man can afford it, for like everything else worth while the fraternity costs something, if such an organization



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appeals to him, if he can fall in with a group of men who are congenial, and if he is willing to make the sacrifice of time and the readjustment of habits necessary to live with such a group successfully, I usually advise him, if he is asked, to join a fraternity.

I am quite familiar through intimate association with my colleagues and through general reading, with the many and serious objections which have been urged against fraternities. Every year I meet fathers and friends of college students, for the most part men who have never been to college or if they have been who know little or nothing first hand about fraternities, who believe these organizations wholly undemocratic and wholly bad, and who give credence to what they hear about fraternities, as they have faith in the stories published in city papers concerning the riot, rapine and wholesale destruction ordinarily supposed to be waged at the usual student celebration. There has been extant for some years, I know, the general impression that the young men being educated at the institution with which I am connected are accustomed to burn down or demolish a theatre or two following each athletic victory of the various teams, when in point of fact the entire destruction caused by the escapades of five thousand students and their followers in twenty years has not exceeded two hundred and fifty dollars,

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and there is excellent evidence to show that a considerable portion of this was caused by the rabble which is unconnected with the institution but which follows in the wake of these celebrations. So I believe it could be shown if some one would take the pains to investigate that many of the delinquencies which are laid at the doors of fraternities are placed there unjustly and might better be distributed evenly throughout the student body.

Having said so much, however, I am willing to grant that many of the charges which have been urged against fraternities are not without some foundation. Fraternities and fraternity men can easily be found that illustrate the charges of extravagance and dissipation, and snobbishness, and loafing. But the age at which young men go to college is an age when they most easily fall a prey to the temptations to these habits and illustrations are not confined to fraternity men. I could name on any day of the week during the college year men in organizations and out of them and men even in the church of which I am a member who are snobs wasting both their time and their money; but the Presbyterian Church is still a pretty respectable organization. The charges which, a few years ago, were made by Mr. R. T. Crane of Chicago against college men were in no small degree true. Mr. Crane's error was not so much

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in preferring these charges as in failing to observe that the extravagance, and moral irregularities of which he accused college young men are in a much larger degree true of young men who do not go to college. It is true no doubt that fraternity men have in many cases been extravagant and dissipated and lazy, but it can be shown that in every institution where these fraternity derelicts are found as in every town or community there are plenty of men outside of the fraternities who with an equal amount of money at their disposal and equal opportunity are equally sinners.

The indiscretions of a man who belongs to an organization attract more attention and arouse more comment than do those of the individual not so connected. When a fraternity man errs, the character of all his brothers suffers just as when one man in a group coming home late at night is drunk the whole crowd is said to be "stewed." A good many years ago an alumnus of a fraternity with which I am acquainted, during a summer vacation, planned and carried out a party in the chapter house at which some of the men were disgracefully drunk, and the matter became known. He was the only member of the fraternity present, the affair was contrary to the rules of the organization, it was without the knowledge of any one in the active chapter, and the man was severely disciplined. Wise objectors to fraternities remem-

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ber the event still, and I think honestly believe that the same sort of orgies yet go on regularly in this house, though it is in fact one of the best conducted at the institution where it is established, and the charges made against it are entirely false. One spendthrift, one gambler, one unclean or intemperate member in a group is likely to give his reputation to the whole fraternity, and the organization and fraternities in general suffer as a result. At a large fraternity gathering which I attended not long ago one representative of a western chapter became intoxicated and made a public fool of himself. The chapter of which he was a member and all the representatives of it suffered in reputation and in influence through the exhibition of the weak character of this one man. On the other hand, one such man unconnected with an organization passes practically without comment and has little effect upon the general reputation of the student body. My experience has been that the faults and dissipations attributed to fraternities exist in much smaller degree than is generally supposed, and not proportionately in any materially greater degree than would on investigation be discovered in the general student body. As a disciplinary officer in an institution which numbers approximately five thousand young men, most of whom I know personally, I have had ample opportunity during the last dozen years to



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make daily observations, and I have drawn the conclusions just stated with a good many detailed facts in mind.

So far as I know the irregular conditions which exist in fraternities in one college or another are characteristic of the general student body in which they exist, and may be attributed either to indifference on the part of the members of the faculty, lack of sympathy for student matters, or actual inefficiency as regards student discipline and control. It would not be either good taste or good judgment for me to name specific instances to substantiate these statements, but if I were permitted to do so it would not be difficult to cite many illustrations. Sometime ago I visited one institution, for example, where objectionable fraternity conditions have been widely advertised. The fraternity men are here said to be given generally to drinking and dissipation and perhaps truthfully so; but it is true, also, so far as I could see from a pretty careful observation of conditions covering a period of several days at two or three different times, that members of the general student body are equally given to these irregularities and further than this, that many members of the faculty are not free from criticism. At this institution I was invited freely to the homes of members of the faculty, and I have no recollection of being at any such house where liquor of some

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sort was not served, and this whether students were present or not. At the faculty club there was general drinking, and at times to such an extent as quite perceptibly to increase the drinker's spirits. I recall having been at a dinner here attended by perhaps seventy-five students and members of the faculty at which drinking was general, and the members of the faculty present showed quite as much color and undue exhilaration as a result as did any student. A considerable amount of drunkenness among the students was evidenced at the end of the week, and when I inquired from a prominent member of the faculty what was done in such cases, I discovered that no one assumed any responsibility for these things, and no official notice was taken of them.

One member of the faculty said that he did not wish to know what students were doing and when business called him to pass through the locality where students were likely to be seen in an intoxicated condition, he managed if possible to take a round-about road. Not only was no intelligent attempt made to regulate these matters in the fraternities, but the general student body followed its own sweet will, and the members of the faculty in their own homes and in their club houses set the students an example of drinking which these same students, being young and without the mature judgment of their elders, followed often neither

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wisely nor well. For an objectionable custom which, it seemed to me, was quite general, the fraternities got the advertising and the criticism. The only difference which I can see in these cases between the fraternity man who drinks to excess and those outside of such organizations who do the same thing is that the fraternity man goes to destruction with his friends about him, while the other men have perhaps a less sociable but an equally destructive experience. In this institution to which I have referred I believe the faculty was wholly to blame for conditions. It set the students an example publicly and privately, it took no responsibility and exercised no disciplinary control, but weakly allowed to continue a practice which can only be subversive of all that tends to the development of good citizens.

My visit to other prominent institutions where fraternity difficulties have arisen and where there has been general criticism of the habits and life of the men in these organizations has led me to the conclusion that in most if not in all cases the conditions in the fraternities is only a slightly exaggerated instance of what may be found generally among the student body. For these conditions, whatever they may be, I do not believe the fraternities or any other undergraduate organizations can be or should be wholly blamed. My experience for twenty-five years with thousands of



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undergraduate men leads me to the conclusion that the undergraduate student is on the whole a fair-minded, reasonable being, who is not beyond control, who wants generally to do right, and who whether in fraternities or out of them, is pretty likely to respect a reasonable college law. If colleges have had difficulties, I believe the trouble lies mainly with the faculty, who have not kept awake to student conditions or exercised control or who have been too weak or too indifferent or ignorant to discipline flagrant offenders. The same reason exists too frequently now as existed in the institution in which I was an undergraduate; those members of the faculty who knew of the devilment which was going on did not care, and those members who cared did not know, and so the difficulties increased and insubordination ran riot.

I have not intended this paper primarily as a defense of fraternities, though I think such a defense could without difficulty be made. I have meant it to show that Greek-letter fraternities are not in themselves more artificial than are the ordinary conditions of living in college; they are the outcome of a tendency of young people and old in all conditions and walks of life to form into groups for mutual pleasure and advancement in one line of endeavor or another. If fraternities have not been a source of strength and help in college, it is not the fault of the fraternities but the fault of

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the college authorities who have not set the proper example or shown the proper interest, or exercised the proper supervision or control over their undergraduates—who have in short let the student body run away with them, and who are to blame for it.

In the remainder of this paper I want to show how, in an institution of more than five thousand students during a period of nearly fifteen years, fraternities and similar organizations have been a real help to me. As an undergraduate student in the University of Illinois I had no connection with Greek-letter fraternities and no first hand knowledge of them. They were not permitted at that time in the institution, and I was led to believe that they were altogether objectionable. They were later allowed to reorganize in the University, and as an executive officer charged with the supervision of student conduct, student problems, and student activities, I became very intimately associated with these and other similar student organizations. The fact that shortly after leaving college I became a member of a Greek-letter fraternity, I believe has not in any undue degree prejudiced me in their favor.

One of the most practical things which the fraternities have done for the University of Illinois within the last fifteen years is materially to help in taking care of the problems of housing students at a reasonable rate. The fact that eleven of our

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fraternities have built and own their houses and that most of the others have interested property owners and real estate men to build for them proper homes has helped in a small place where there are no dormitories and where good lodging houses are only too rare, to provide comfortable homes for fully a thousand men. The conditions under which these students in fraternity houses live are on the whole satisfactory. The study rooms are quite as convenient as they could get outside of these houses, the bathing and toilet facilities are more than ordinarily adequate, and such students besides have the run of an entire house. The board furnished is not more expensive than that to be obtained at most regular boarding houses about the campus, and in almost every case it is of better quality, is better cooked and far more carefully served. The opportunities for work and study in these houses are as good for those who really want to work as they are anywhere. All the organizations have definite house rules as to hours of study, and all of these rules prohibit drinking and gambling in the houses. It is a satisfaction to be able to say, also, that in a very large majority of cases these rules are seriously enforced.

With an indifferent landlady and lax house rules or no rules at all the student who lives outside of a fraternity house may have much less careful supervision than does the fraternity man, and his



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irregularities of life are much less likely to be detected and corrected than are those of the fraternity man. It is a great gratification to me, therefore, to know where all these men live, how they are taken care of, and the conditions under which they do their work. With us at least it is not true that fraternity men live in surroundings more luxurious than those to which they are accustomed at home and those to which they are likely to be accustomed when they leave college. Some of the houses, it is true, are beautiful and a few of them have cost a considerable sum of money, but the rooms in which students live are in no case luxurious, and in most cases are quite as humble in their furnishings as the student has been used to or will find when he leaves college. Usually the first floor rooms of a fraternity house are well furnished, but even these have little of actual luxury. In order that these statements may not be wholly theory, I make a practice of keeping regularly in touch with some of the older men in each one of the organizations, and at some time during the year I manage to visit and take a meal with them. I have been from cellar to garret of most of the fraternity houses of which I have spoken. The total living expenses for each student in these houses, including board, lodging, and the general running expenses of the house, average about thirty-three dollars a month. Some organi-



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zations who live in small houses keep their expenses below this amount and some run above it, but the variation is not great in either direction, and is little or no more than a student would have to pay for similar accommodations outside of a fraternity house.

The control of students living in fraternities is likely to be more satisfactory than of those living in dormitories controlled either by private individuals or by the University, for the students living in a fraternity house are controlled by officers whom they have elected and are under rules which they have themselves devised and approved. Fraternity freshmen sometimes, it is true, try to evade rules and succeed in deceiving the fraternity officers, but the spirit in which regulations are regarded and discipline is received is altogether more kindly than is true of such things in a private or an institutional dormitory. I have found, also, that these officers ordinarily take their responsibilities more seriously than do the officers in a private dormitory, and get satisfactory results more easily. I generally find that a fraternity officer can enforce the regulations in the chapter without much difficulty, and this is not always equally true in the dormitory. The man in the dormitory can move if he is dissatisfied; the fraternity man cannot, and so learns to take his medicine without serious protest.

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In the correction of the habits or the conduct of individual students or in the stimulation of lazy or indifferent students to better scholastic work, I have regularly found the fraternities helpful. I have made it a point to know the men in each chapter, and to coöperate with the officers of the fraternity in every way possible in developing these men in the best way. Our records for some time past have shown that the freshmen living in fraternity houses have a higher standing than have those freshmen who live outside of these houses. If a fraternity man is behind in his college work or is developing into a loafer, in addition to the influence which I as a college officer can have upon him I have learned that if I have a talk with the president of his fraternity and place the situation before him, I can have added to my own influence the influence of the whole fraternity, which in many instances is much more potent than my own. If fraternity men are developing bad moral habits I am always able to find some influential upperclassman in the organization who will take the matter in hand and help to correct it. Over and over again fraternity officers come to me in confidence and ask me to help them to correct the habits or the conduct of erring brothers. Often they tell the man concerned that they are intending to elicit my aid and the whole thing is quite open and frank.

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Only last spring two fraternity officers came to me and said, "Two of our sophomores are developing bad associations down town; they are learning to drink, and they have more than once come home drunk. We have done what we could, but the conditions are not improved. We want you to help us." I called the men, we talked it over, they promised to break away from their harmful associations, and they have kept their promise. This fraternity was not an unusual one nor was it a particularly "Sunday School" organization; in fact it was quite the contrary, but it had standards of conduct and of scholarship which these men were violating, and they were thus helping to lower the standing of the fraternity. The case of another student is interesting. He is a boy of excellent mind but of weak principles. He had been guilty during his first two years in college of a number of derelictions of which I had talked seriously to him. His influence, I felt, was growing bad. He was a ready promiser who admitted usually more than I accused him of and offered immediate and complete reformation. His reform, however, was usually short lived. I was convinced that he ought to be sent away from college, but before having him dismissed I called the president of his fraternity and put the facts before him. He asked to be given a final chance at the man and I consented, with



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the understanding with the man and his fraternity officer that if his conduct in the future should prove objectionable, I should be informed and the man should sever his connection with the institution. Only a short time ago the president of the fraternity came to me again and said that he could do nothing with the other man, and expressed a willingness in the interest of the progress and the moral standing of the fraternity, to have him go. The student was given a chance to withdraw and did so. I could multiply these illustrations indefinitely as to the help which fraternities almost daily give to me in their desire to strengthen their individual members and so to raise the standing of their chapter and of the University.

Perhaps no one undergraduate custom has done the University more harm during the last ten or fifteen years than the practice of hazing. It developed rapidly, the student escapades were grossly exaggerated by the newspapers, and it bade fair to injure the institution seriously. During the last three years there has been practically no hazing, and during the present year I do not know of a single case. This changed condition cannot be attributed directly to fraternities, for the college authorities used every effort to stamp out the practice and disciplined severely those men who were detected in it, but it can be said

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truthfully that only rarely were fraternities seriously mixed up in the custom, and that there grew up in these organizations a general sentiment against it. Even at the outset when fraternities were not actively opposed to hazing they were only to a very limited degree engaged in it, and later they became in a more active manner to frown upon it. Because of their failure as organizations to participate actively in the practice and because of the active work which many of the leading fraternity men did in opposition to hazing, the fraternities have helped us materially in stamping out the practice.

The two towns between which our University is located have had during the past few years some very severe and interesting fights on the local option question. When the towns voted for temperance regulations a few years ago it was virtually the work of the students which brought this condition about, and the men at the head of the organization which accomplished the business were largely fraternity men. Because they were already in organization it was easier for them to organize. It must not be supposed, either, that those who worked the hardest for local option laws were themselves men who never drank. Many men said to me that although they were in no sense total abstainers, they felt that it was for the best interests of the towns that they should go dry,

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and so they were glad to use their influence to bring this condition about.

In the development of principles of honesty and in the discouraging of cribbing, fraternities have generally used their influence in the right direction. Here again the influence of leadership counts. I was discussing only recently with one of our freshman fraternity men the question of dishonesty in examinations. "We have had pretty definite directions at our house," he said, "as to what we should do. Our president called us together before examinations began and gave us a straight talk about being square and honest and above board during the examinations." Is it by such methods as this that the fraternities may help and have helped to encourage honesty in classroom work.

The fraternity sets before its members, also, certain standards of manners, the effects of which can be seen everywhere. The fraternity man who is crude, or coarse, or impolite, or ill-trained has some one to correct him, has some one usually to set a good example before him. The man outside must work these things out for himself, as he very frequently does, or remain as he is. Whether one eats with his knife, or sits when a lady comes into the room, or keeps his hat on when he talks to her on the street, or fails to call on the hostess who has entertained him at dinner, or sidesteps the



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reception line at a dance, may be in themselves trifling, but they may show the difference between good and bad manners. The fraternity man usually finds some one willing to point out to him these errors if he makes them, while the other man may stumble on indefinitely in a condition of ignorance. The real fraternity is a home, and those living in it usually get a good deal of the social training that one may rightfully expect to receive in a home. Careful dress and nice manners are learned largely by example and associations, and this example and these proper associations one is very likely to find in the fraternity house. I do not underestimate the value of sterling worth, but it counts for much more when linked with courtesy and a neat appearance.

The fraternity as an organization helps materially in the training of college leaders. The man who can successfully stand at the head of a group of twenty-five or thirty men, who can manage a household as it were with all the multifarious things that such management implies, is usually well fitted for leadership in other ways. Fraternity men manage their own house servants, oversee the care of their houses, care for the finances of these houses, and take many serious responsibilities which men outside of these organizations may evade. The men at the head of things in our University are for these reasons usually fraternity

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men, not because they are naturally more capable or more reliable than are other men, and not because fraternities by their political influence put their men at the head of affairs, but because they have had more experience and because they have at the outset an organization to help them in whatever they are undertaking.

Every college or university must depend upon its alumni for the accomplishment of certain work for its advancement. There are of course some alumni whose influence is not all that could be desired, but the live, right-minded alumnus, especially the alumnus of a state university, can do much to keep the institution in a right light before the citizens of the state upon which it must depend for its support. He is in a sense its advertising agent. If he gets out of touch or out of sympathy with his alma mater, she thereby suffers a great loss. The fraternity more than any other agency that I am acquainted with helps to tie a man to his old associations and to anchor him to the college. The fraternity after the undergraduate has finished his course and leaves college furnishes him a place to come back to; when he drops into the fraternity house after an absence of a few years there is still some one there who knows him, there are many more who have heard of him, and all are glad to see him. He still has a home at the old place into which he can fit



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as easily, usually, as when he was an undergraduate. Of the thousands of men who last fall returned at the time of our annual Home-coming a very large per cent were fraternity men, and this was true because these men had had some very definite interests when they were in college, they had some one on the ground to call them back, and they had a place to go when they got back. Their return even for the pleasure only of renewing old associations still binds them more closely to the University and makes their coöperation more certain when it is needed.

My experience as an executive officer, then, is that Greek-letter fraternities and similar organizations in college have been to me of the greatest service in advancing the best interests of the University as I believe they may be to other college officers in a similar situation, if they will but study how best to utilize them. Instead of working to get rid of these organizations as some college officers seem to desire to do, I am glad to encourage their development because in them I see an easier control and direction of student enterprises, student activities, and student thought, and an easier development of the right sort of student morals and ideals.

## *Fraternity Home Life*

### FRATERNITY HOME LIFE

When I was in college, there used to be living near the campus a half dozen or more kindly souls to whom fate had shown little consideration and who, thrown on their own resources, had chosen to earn their living by keeping a boarding house. Theirs was not the sort of sordid mercenary business which is now generally carried on by those who provide meals for students. It was on the whole a kindly, motherly service which they performed, not half of which we were ever able to pay for. They took us into their houses and tried to give us a home as well as to see that we were fed. Often when we were living with them we would find that the gaping holes in our hose which our careless feet had torn would be neatly mended; lost buttons would find their way back again, and some evening when we came back to our room tired and hungry from a long tramp we would discover a plate of gingerbread or a bowl of Winesaps waiting. It was almost like living at home with mother.

They did not lose sight of our moral welfare either. There was no indifference to our derelictions, and no overlooking of our shortcomings; we were guarded and called to account as if we had been their own children. It is only a few days ago that one of my old classmates was recounting

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to me an escapade of his undergraduate days which illustrates well the point I have in mind. He was something of a joker, and thought it would be great sport to make his landlady think that he had been drinking. He came stumbling up the stairs one evening before she had gone to bed, simulating all the antics of one intoxicated. An empty whisky bottle found in his room next morning confirmed all her suspicions, and she called young Brown into the parlor that evening for a private talk. It was no berating, however, which she gave him, but a gentle, appealing, motherly talk which so touched him that he never forgot it. He was so taken aback by her kindly interest in him that he did not have the courage to let her know that it was all a practical joke he had been playing; but if he had ever had any thought of doing irregular things, he said, they were by her influence banished from his mind forever.

But these days and these kindly souls are going from our rapidly growing colleges. The relations which exist between the student and his lodging keeper are more strictly business-like than they used to be. There is not often much sentiment wasted by either upon the other. I asked a recent graduate the other day where he lived when he was in college, and he answered that he did not remember. If the young man who goes to

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college now desires anything that even simulates home life he must make it for himself. No institution has done more in recent years to throw around young fellows just entering college some of the atmosphere and the influences of home than has the fraternity. In fact the chief justification of fraternities in my mind is not that they make for higher scholarship, or greater social prestige, or stronger political influence, but that they aim to furnish for their members a lodging place and associations that are something more than those of a mere boarding house but which have many of the restrictions, and safeguards, and influences of home.

Mr. Norton T. Horr, in a recent address before the eightieth convention of Delta Upsilon, expresses something of this idea when he says: "The college fraternity, aside from its social features, is designed to provide by organization such restraints upon individual conduct as will directly add to the good order, harmony, discipline, and general welfare of the school, but which would otherwise be lacking. The choice of associates for the years of college life may well be the most momentous event of the young man's career. His fraternity is to provide him with playmates, frequently with a home, and his associates, particularly the upperclassmen, become the only active supervisors of his fidelity to the serious business



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of school. Mutual obligations are thereby created which have a deep and lasting influence upon character, if properly exercised. Not only is the novice bound to give to his new association the best that is in him, but the fraternity chapter is bound to reciprocate, or it fails in its organic purpose. If this be all true, as we believe it to be, colleges should encourage the establishment of more chapters, and more fraternities, to the end that all the students of companionable instincts and decent behavior may find the intimacy and the benefits of close association."

The problem which is before the young fellows who are at the head of a fraternity, and who undertake to establish and to maintain in the chapter house the conditions which surround healthy home life is not an easy one. The undergraduates in a fraternity house are usually inexperienced, they do not differ widely as to their ages, and their time is largely taken up with other things; they are young and do not always take life seriously, and so the responsibilities of managing the house either weigh on them heavily, or they are likely to neglect them. If they succeed it will be because they are closely united in sympathy and because each man does his part to bring about the desired result. Such a home life for them would be impossible if wrangling and jealousies and factions develop. It must be wrought out through diplo-

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macy and personal interest; by example rather than by autocratic rule. Just as it is impossible to have an agreeable home life without unity of feeling, so it is not to be expected that there will be comradeship in the life of the fraternity unless the men can pull together.

Indifference on the part of individual members is most disorganizing. It is usually better to court open opposition than to endure indifference; for an open opponent can be met and his arguments refuted, but there is little possibility of doing anything with the indifferent member. "I don't care what the fellows do," a fraternity officer said to me not long ago, "just so they don't bother me." It was a selfish attitude and one which is subversive of all good government and all satisfactory home life. Everyone must care, and everyone must work for the best interest of the house. If one man is to do all the work, it will be badly done.

Any successful home life, and to this rule the fraternity is no exception, is founded upon concessions; some one must always be giving up. It is an unselfish life in which one member must be constantly willing to yield his own preferences and desires in deference to the wishes of the other members. It is a life in which even cherished habits are to be broken and chronic practices changed. It is sometimes a pretty hard experience



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for an only child who has so far yielded to no one and has been used to having every member of the household, from father to the family dog, come when he called; but it is a helpful experience, and it is well if one has it early. I recall a young fellow last year, the only child of a prominent physician, who was pledged to a fraternity—but gave back his pledge button because he could not have his own way in all things. He had from his childhood, if not from infancy, run the household at home, and he was unhappy when he could not do the same thing in college. Later in the year he was pledged to another fraternity, but even yet he was too set in his ways and too selfish to adjust himself to the life, and he got out of it this time by going home and entering another institution. When he gets a home of his own he will very likely browbeat his wife and abuse his children. He has little idea of the sacrifices demanded in a real home. The fraternity home life is a life of adjusting oneself to all sorts of things which are trifling, perhaps, but which may not at the outset seem pleasant. One must learn to eat what he does not like and when he does not like it; he must go to bed and get up and go out to suit the convenience of others; he must sometimes study when he would like to play, and polish the floor or mow the lawn when he would like to be strolling on the back campus, and he must do so willingly and cheer-

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fully if he contributes his share to the real home life. If at home, as is usually the case, it is mother who is responsible for the details which make an actual home, it is because she makes sacrifices easily, does not think always if ever of her own comfort, is pleased when the others are happy and comfortable.

There can be no real home without a recognized head, as there can be no effective organization without some one whose business it is to manage it, and who attends to this business. We hear a good deal these days in opposition to autocracy in institutions and organization and families, but I have never seen an institution or an organization or a family that was worthy of the name that did not have some one at its head with power to direct it, and with judgment and energy to use that power when necessary. It was that sort of family in which I was brought up, and I have never known a happier or a more harmonious one: and it is that sort of institution in which I have been educated and in which I have worked, and I have no objection to make as to its management; when I want to get something done, I know where to go, just as I knew in my boyhood that when father came to a conclusion the matter was settled. It would be a dangerous situation in any business if everyone connected with it had a right to come and go as he pleased, or to formulate his plans

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of action in accordance with his own personal wishes. Some one must be in control. The fraternity home must be run in the same way, but the man who is at its head must be broadminded and sympathetic and strong willed. He must be the head in fact as well as in name. I could give innumerable illustrations of men elected to the head of fraternities because they were popular, because they were good athletes, because they had been the longest in the chapter, because they were good fellows, but without the slightest fitness to be in control of the house. Sometimes the only reason seems to be that the man is "entitled to it," but we shall not get far until we decide that no man is entitled to a position until he can fill it satisfactorily. A large percentage of the failures in fraternity management and so in fraternity life come from the fact that there is a weak or inefficient or undiplomatic man at the head of the chapter.

The influence of the size of the chapter upon the possibility of realizing the ideal home life in the chapter house has been variously estimated. There are those fraternity officers who think a chapter roll of twenty is as large as it is ever desirable to allow; others argue for a larger number. With us at the University of Illinois the chapters of those organizations which live in their own houses have sometimes run nearly or quite to forty, the only defensible excuse being that the larger the



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chapter the lower it was possible to keep living expenses, and that in a community where a majority of the students come from families of moderate means, it is not wise that expenses should be made prohibitive. It is doubtful whether or not it is ever expedient to make a house so large as to require an active chapter of forty in order that the house expenses may be met and yet kept within moderation. The better solution would be to build smaller and less expensive houses. One rather significant fact has been brought out by our investigations of scholarship records at the University of Illinois, however, and that is that scholarship has been affected very little by the size of the chapter, those chapters which have the highest enrollment having ordinarily quite as high scholastic standing as do the smaller chapters. It seems to me quite evident, however, that the possibilities for harmony, and unity, and general good-fellowship are lessened as the chapter roll grows beyond a certain point, and that the difficulties of management may so increase as to be more than one man ought reasonably to be expected to undertake. My experience leads me to the conclusion that it would be better to have more organizations with a smaller enrollment in each than to allow the members to run as high as they have sometimes done with us. One man with whom I spoke not long ago whose chapter has been un-

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usually large this past year, said that the chapter house had seemed more to him like the headquarters of a convention than a home.

I have never been able to develop any great liking for the young fellow who was disloyal to his father—who evaded duties placed upon him or disregarded regulations which had been mutually agreed upon. I have always felt that a certain respect was due the head of the house which every child should recognize and give willingly. I have in mind a home where the father is a successful indulgent man proud of his sons. He is liberal with money and almost foolishly proud of any of the successes or accomplishments of his boys and girls. The children, however, seldom show him any consideration or respect. If they help in any way about the home or in his business it is a concession on their part they think, and they must be paid liberally; his opinions are ridiculed, his suggestions are ignored; his plans they never help to carry out, and they seldom regard any of his wishes. Their chief desire is to get from him money and privileges and to shirk personal responsibility. It is not a happy home, and there is in it very little that suggests real home life. When added to this disrespect of the younger members of the family there is the lack of coöperation of the older members, the family degenerates into merely a poor boarding house. These things are

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equally true of the fraternity. Unless there is a real respect by the members for the head of the house and coöperation with his plans and ideals the fraternity home life will go pretty well to destruction. Within the last year I have seen many illustrations of this in our own fraternities. The various factions which develop under these circumstances have their effect upon everyone in the organization. "We have been able to do little with our freshmen this year," an upperclassman said to me at commencement time. "They are disorganized, disrespectful, and unmanageable." I could easily see the reason. They were like a family of children when father and mother are constantly quarrelling. There had been no harmony among the upperclassmen, no respect for the president, no real support of authority, and it was no wonder that the younger members were rebellious. When the upperclassmen develop jealousy and dissension, the freshmen are usually not strong for the spirit of unity.

There must be rules in a well ordered household which every member is under obligation to respect and to observe. These regulations may not necessarily be printed, but they should at least be definitely understood. There have never been any printed regulations in my own household, but I have no doubt but that it might be helpful to the happy conduct of affairs if I could see somewhere



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a gentle reminder to use the door mat before entering, or to turn off the light when leaving my bedroom or the basement, or to have my laundry ready every Monday morning when the wagon comes. There are a score of practices upon which there should be agreement and uniform procedure. In the fraternity home life where the members of the family are so numerous, and the head of the family is so frequently changed, it is much safer if the regulations are down in black and white. I presume that most fraternities have somewhere on the secretary's books a set of definitely devised and specifically phrased house rules just as every benedict has had at some time a marriage certificate, but where these documents are, both the fraternity president and the married man are often in blissful ignorance. Just last fall the president of a prominent fraternity said to me, "Do you have a copy of our house rules? One of our old men said you were given a copy a few years ago, and I don't believe we've ever had them around the house since." I fished them out for him, but they are probably lost again before this time. Unless the rules are definite, and regularly reiterated, and unless they are constantly and seriously enforced they will count for little.

Too many fraternity men are of the opinion that house rules are for underclassmen only, and that if an upperclassman should occasionally

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ignore a rule of the house he is simply availing himself of a privilege to which his age and his position entitle him. In point of fact youth and thoughtlessness have always been considered the best reasons for leniency in the enforcement of rules, and on this ground the freshman and not the upperclassman should be excused for delinquencies if any one is to claim immunity. There is a common feeling also that at vacation times and during the summer when only a few men are living in the house there should be a more liberal interpretation if not enforcement of rules. I have had really mature fellows whose judgment ordinarily one could depend upon argue, apparently in good faith, that most indiscreet if not immoral things might be done with impunity in a fraternity house just so they were not done during regular term time. Such men are ignoring principle; they fail to see that it is the worst thing done in a house, and not the best, no matter at what time during the year it occurs, that gives it its character. Since I began the writing of this paragraph a fraternity officer has been to see me with regard to certain conduct in his house. All the men living there are mature fellows. "It is pretty hard," he said, in an attempt at the justification of certain irregularities which had been going on, "for mature men to submit to restrictions of any kind." And yet the mature man ought to be the

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first one to see the necessity of regulations and the obligation he is under to be governed by them; but as I have said in another article, it is often the older men, and not infrequently the alumni who most willingly yield to a violation of house rules, and who justify themselves because, as they say, they are old enough to know what they are doing.

House rules should be sensible. They should be such as it is possible to keep, and excepting as regards study hours, perhaps, they should usually be applicable to all members of the organization. It should be the purpose of such rules to preserve the quiet and order of the house, for every fraternity home should be a place where men can live comfortably and where undisturbed they can do the serious work of college quietly. Such rules also should look out for the general welfare; it should not be possible for one man to annoy or disturb all the rest, or to do anything which will upset the regular routine of the house. They should enforce a certain respect for the good name and reputation of the house and should prohibit the doing of anything in the house at any time which would bring discredit upon it or upon its members. All these things should be matters of principle rather than matters of expediency or of diplomacy. I have no sympathy with the man who says that it is of course better not to violate house rules, but if one does do it he ought to do it



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so skilfully as not to be found out. A fraternity man ought not to countenance the doing of anything in his chapter house that is out of keeping with the dignity of any home or that he would not approve of in the other home of which his mother and sister are members. Gambling, drinking, vulgar and profane talk, and immoral women have no place in a real home of any sort, and so should not be allowed to contaminate a fraternity home. If young fellows could be made to feel something of the sacredness of home and to apply this to their fraternity homes we should be able to banish easily from our fraternities some of the things which are now kept out only by exercising the greatest vigilance, if they are sometimes kept out at all.

It has been interesting to me to see how this idea of reverence for the home has been developed in many of our fraternity men by their going into their own houses. I presume it is less easy for the ordinary adult to look upon a rented house or a house in which he is living temporarily in anything like the same light as that in which he regards the dwelling which he has helped to plan, which he has himself built and furnished, and in which he has the pride of ownership. Be that as it may, the fraternities with us who now own their houses have with a few exceptions tightened up on their house rules and have become much more rigid in

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their enforcement than was the case when they were living in quarters which they rented from year to year. "We are not going to have nearly so much trouble in keeping the fellows straight, now that we are in our own house," is a remark which I frequently hear, and which I think is based upon the facts. This attitude comes largely, I am sure, from the increased feeling that the fraternity house has for them become a real home which they respect and protect.

My general objections to lunch counters and to the other unconventional opportunities which are offered about almost every campus for satisfying hunger are that they tend to develop bad manners. There is no restraint in such surroundings; there are no standards set, and no one to hold the student to them if there were such standards. Even the ordinary boarding house keeper may find it difficult at times to hold her boarders to anything like conventional manners. At home it is different, because violations of good manners may be noticed and the attention of the one guilty of such unconvolutions called to the fact. We expect mother or father or older sister to act as a sort of overseer of our manners even when we make open objection to what they may have criticized in us. It is their right, and in this regard as in others the fraternity may well emulate the home. Table talk and table dress, and table behavior will usually follow



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the standards set by the older men. A good old lady I knew in my boyhood used to remark that her boys always behaved themselves better when they were dressed up, and I have frequently noticed that as fraternity men have held themselves to careful dressing and careful talk at table their general manners were improved. The more carelessly dressed a fraternity permits its men to come to the breakfast or the dinner table, the more slovenly and crude will their talk and their general behavior at table be. If there is no other way of stopping various bad practices at table a system of fines for violations of conventions may be imposed.

The fraternity cannot emulate the example of the home better than in the cultivation of friendly social relations with men in other fraternities and with men outside of any fraternity. If the home life of fraternity men is such as it should be they cannot put themselves in a better light before those who are somewhat skeptical about the influences of fraternities than to let this home life be seen. The practice followed by many fraternities of one evening a week inviting a certain number of men in to dinner is a good one especially if all the members enter into the spirit of the practice and do their part at entertaining the guests. My observation of such a custom has been that often much of the pleasure of the occasion is spoiled

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because many of the fellows leave as soon as dinner is over, others show little or no interest in the invited guests, and the whole responsibility of their entertainment is thrown upon the man who invited them to dinner or at best upon two or three members of the fraternity.

If it is true that you can tell very little about the real character of an individual until you see him in his home, it is equally true that you can tell very little about a fraternity until you see how it entertains its guests. On the whole I have felt that the training in manners in the fraternity house is careful, and that the guest who goes to one of these houses is pretty sure of receiving the most courteous and thoughtful consideration. But even good manners are not always inborn, and there is much to be learned when we are young, both from precept and from example. That not all fraternity men have so learned a few illustrations will at least suggest. I have gone to fraternity houses to dinner only to find that the man who had invited me was dining somewhere else; I have been at other houses where only a small percentage of the members even took the trouble to speak to me. I was the guest of someone else they apparently thought, so why waste their time on me. At first such neglect was something of a shock to me, for I had been taught even as a child that the guest of any member of my family was

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for the time being my guest, and was entitled to respect and consideration. I have not yet got to the point of feeling that this is not equally true of the guest invited to a fraternity house. Freshmen should be taught to speak to everyone who has been invited to the house or who is in any way the guest of the fraternity.

I have been at any number of fraternity parties within the last few years where few if any of the freshmen even spoke to the invited guests, and very frequently even the upperclassmen ignored them. I remember with distinctness a fraternity party which I attended a few years ago. It was being held in the chapter house and we arrived at the time indicated. The door bell had gone out of business and after vainly trying to announce our arrival from the outside we walked in. No one gave us any attention, but knowing the house well we found the dressing rooms and ultimately joined the other guests. Only two or three of the older members spoke to us, we were allowed to find the supper table ourselves, and during the entire evening we were not molested. We found our way about and entertained ourselves as best we could, and when we had had enough we came home.

Not long ago, being in a college town in another state, and being a grand officer of my fraternity I thought it would be a courteous act to call upon the members of the chapter which was located in



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that town. Accordingly I did so. I explained who I was to the indifferent young man who came to the door of the house in response to my ring and was permitted to enter. It was Saturday afternoon and the house was full of men, but I was introduced to none of them, nor did any one excepting the man who met me at the door speak to me. I stood in the hallway a while and then, I think, I found a bench and sat. I did my best for a quarter of an hour to be cheerful and to show interest, but my host was helpless and did not know what to do with me. Since no one essayed to come to his rescue or mine, and since I still retained my overcoat and held my hat I found it not difficult to withdraw. These are, of course, extreme examples of the carelessness of fraternity men in recognizing the social obligations of their home life, but I meet similar situations every week. Sometimes the cause is ignorance of what is required, sometimes it is selfishness, but most often it is thoughtlessness. Here again the head of the house should take the responsibility or should see that someone else does, and no member of the household should be in doubt what to do with an expected or an unexpected guest. Every guest who is invited to one's house, whether it be the President of the University or the most insignificant freshman who has come in to see an old high school friend should be treated with courtesy and



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thoughtfulness, and should at least be spoken to by every member of the organization. Even though the guest does not expect it, the members of the fraternity owe it to themselves to show this much good breeding.

In the relationships which exist between the individual members of the fraternity in the home itself lies the real and potent influence of the fraternity. There can be no actual brotherhood unless there is something more than a mere mechanical union between the men. The running of the house may be pretty completely a business proposition, but in the personal relations between the men there must be something of sentiment, some affection, some warm regard of the one man for the other and vital interest in his progress and welfare or the home life will lack much of being what it should be. "I never realized what these fraternity brothers of mine meant to me," I heard a man say only a few weeks ago, "until I bade good-bye to them when we parted in leaving college; and I did not fully realize what they meant until I came back after an absence of several years and renewed the old acquaintance. There was a unity of feeling which I know I shall never find anywhere else, a comradeship which has bound us as closely together as if we were real brothers. There is nothing else like it in the world." If the fraternity man feels this sentiment

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he will have little difficulty in adjusting himself to the conditions within a fraternity house, and he will soon develop for his chapter house and the men within it a feeling that is very closely akin to the sentiment which he felt for the home of his childhood and for those who were within it. If he has this feeling he will respect the house and he will guard the good name of each member of the organization as he would defend the reputation of his own brother or sister.

The true fraternity man will hesitate before discussing with an outsider the differences of opinion or the unpleasant relationships which are likely to develop in any chapter. Every fraternity as every family has its skeleton, its blots on the escutcheon, but these should not be paraded before the public. Every year I am surprised and often shocked at the very private matters of fraternity life which become general campus gossip. It is a badly organized family the members of which air its private difficulties in club rooms and at card parties; so it is a badly organized fraternity that cannot keep its own unsavory affairs within its own chapter house walls. I am sometimes asked how it is that I am acquainted with so many of the private affairs of the various fraternities upon the campus, and I always reply that it is because fraternity men talk so much. If the fraternity is to have any home life worth while

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its members should respect the private matters of home.

The perfect home life anywhere is not attained excepting through adherence to high ideals; it is not possible excepting through sacrifice and unselfishness and constant concessions. The selfish man will never have a happy home, though if every one yields to his wishes he may be satisfied with it. So in the fraternity. Its home life must be based upon ideals; it must be wrought out by unselfishness, by sacrifice, by daily concessions, and if it is so done the fraternity man can look back upon his life in college as a sweet memory where the home companionship and the home influences were as real and as enduring as any which he ever experienced.





## *The Fraternity and Its Underclassmen*

### THE FRATERNITY AND ITS UNDER- CLASSMEN

At the University of Illinois as at most other similar institutions, I presume, there is a tradition that freshmen, especially freshmen who belong to a fraternity, should be kept in the background, should be required to do most of the unpleasant or "dirty" work about the house, and should be denied many of the privileges which are open to other members. Occasionally a sophomore who has been especially negligent or derelict is put under freshman rules, but this is unusual, and ordinarily all a freshman need do to get out from under the ban is to live nine months after he has entered college. House rules for freshmen are often different from those laid down for other classmen and those rules which have to do with study hours are enforced against them with especial rigidity. The result is that the freshmen go to their rooms shortly after dinner is finished and study or make a bluff of doing so; freshmen stay in perhaps while other classmen may be enjoying themselves; and if there be any irregularities carried on by the older brothers the freshmen are put to bed or given a good book to read in the library which will help to stimulate their imaginations.

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This enforced studiousness and regularity of life has two results. Being with their books a considerable number of hours a day and having no strenuous prejudices against carrying their work, it is impossible that they should not learn something; so fraternity freshmen come out at the end of each semester with grades that average somewhat higher than do those of freshmen outside of such organizations. So far the result is excellent.

The second result seems to me not so good. The freshman has not always liked the restrictions which have been placed upon him in the fraternity house. Released from them completely as he usually is at the end of the freshman year he feels often much as a man might who is allowed to break training or who has been let out of prison, and his tendency is frequently to go to the opposite extreme. Two very battered looking freshmen were brought to me a few weeks ago by a city policeman who had found them in a state of intoxication trying to make their way home from one of the disreputable districts down town. They were, on the whole, decent fellows of good reputation. One had in fact earlier in the year broken his pledge to a fraternity because, as he told me, some of the men drank more than he thought right or good for them. Their only reason for being in the condition in which they were found was, as they tried to explain it to me, because they had been kept in

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so strictly that they felt they must have one experience to celebrate their release from the bondage of freshman life. It is this sort of revolt which I think is the second and the objectionable result of the ordinary way in which freshmen are controlled in fraternity houses. The average young fellow will submit for a time to a strict military régime, but later he is likely to revolt and go to the opposite extreme. The discipline that is best is that which is made to appeal to the reason or that which is self-imposed.

Another phase of this evil result of the rigidly imposed discipline is seen in the attitude which the sophomore just released from freshman discipline holds toward the incoming freshman. Having himself suffered, and done penance, and acted the part of a slave, he does not as one might suppose, feel kindly toward the men who are assuming his former humble place. On the contrary he usually takes the most cruel delight in continuing the practice which he so recently found objectionable. An illustration drawn from a slightly different experience will make my point clearer perhaps. For years, at the University of Illinois, at the opening of college we were annoyed and disturbed by the growing practice of hazing. From a few isolated cases the practice grew to an alarming extent and bade fair permanently to injure the institution. We tried in turn persuasion, suspension, dismissal

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for a longer period without much avail. We came ultimately to expulsion as the only means of breaking up the practice which under this mode of discipline began gradually to decline until now it can be said to have disappeared from the institution. The continuance of the practice was based entirely upon the fact, I was convinced by investigation, that the man hazed this year felt under obligations to get even with some one else next. When there were few or nobody who had any cause to get even there was no incentive to continue the practice, and it lapsed.

I believe that if the practice of rigid discipline for freshmen has any defense it might very well be carried into if not through the sophomore year. It is not difficult to establish the fact that the sophomore year is the most critical year in the college course. Second year students are more knowing, they are harder to control, and notwithstanding the large number of unsuccessful freshmen who for one cause or another drop out at the end of the first year, the second year men will be shown to have a lower scholastic average than do the freshmen. Yet the fraternity men at the University of Illinois come from the best high schools and preparatory schools in the state and in the country. They have a better training than the average boy in college and have had opportunities



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for cultivating their intellects which should make them in college superior students.

My experience for many years has led me to the conclusion that in the management and control of the freshmen and sophomore members of the fraternity may be found at least one cause for the lack of initiative and self-reliance of many fraternity men, and so a cause of weak character and of poor scholarship.

With us, as with many other institutions, I imagine, the control of each fraternity lies almost exclusively with the upperclassmen and not infrequently with the members of the senior class, or it may even be with one or two members of the senior class. Underclassmen are allowed little voice in the conduct of the chapter. Freshmen especially are not expected to take any initiative in fraternity affairs, and, although they are held pretty rigidly to their work, they are not expected or allowed to express an opinion upon the control or management of their own chapters. Sophomores work under few restrictions, but are allowed little voice in affairs and little initiative. Usually the man longest in the chapter, and this may quite likely be the weakest man, is elected as its ruling head. Members are usually given very little responsibility until they become seniors, and are quite often not expected to take any. If the man at the head of the chapter happens to be a strong

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man who can marshal the support of the other upperclassmen and win the respect of the underclassmen, this method of senior control works reasonably well, but if the opposite is true the result is disastrous. I need not go far for illustration. In one fraternity last year, a fraternity which was well toward the bottom of the list in character and scholarship, there was at the head of the chapter a senior, good intentioned, but weak, inefficient, and without influence among the men. He had been elected simply because he was the oldest man in the chapter and not because he had fitness for the position. The fraternity went rapidly down; there was neither order nor control. When I discussed the situation with one of the junior members—a strong efficient fellow—he said, “We see the situation, and regret it very much; but what can we do? We are only juniors, and we have no right to interfere with the management of the seniors.”

In two other cases I made the grave error recently of speaking to junior or sophomore members of fraternities concerning conditions in their chapters which I thought needed correction. I was later spoken to by the president of each organization who said to me that if I wished to make any criticism upon the chapter I should make it to him as president. And yet in each case the president was indifferent and interested mainly in

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being at the head of his organization, and not in assuming the responsibilities and the duties of the office. I had selected the man whom I considered the strong, energetic leader of the group without taking the trouble to find out who was president.

I believe that in general the treatment of underclassmen and especially of freshmen is not such as to develop in them initiative, self-reliance, and the desire to bear responsibility. They are made to keep up their work; they are not taught to do so. They work under a military rule which is seldom helpful. They are given so little part in thinking and acting for themselves, they are treated so much as inferiors and as children, that many of them never get over it, and never come to the point of assuming responsibility for themselves or for the chapter as a whole. Freshmen are seldom expected to have opinions or to take any but the most menial part in bearing the responsibilities of chapter management. The most serious time is when the freshmen year being over, they are released from restraint and have not yet learned anything of independence.

Only last fall an upperclassman of one of the fraternities with which I am well acquainted came to me for advice as to the treatment of a freshman who seemed obstreperous. "What is the matter?" I asked. "Well, he's fresh. He talks to much," was the reply. "What about?" I asked.



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“Why,” the upperclassman said, “he is constantly offering suggestions and making criticisms of our methods; and the most annoying part of it is, he is usually right. But of course you can see that we can never allow a freshman to tell us what we ought to do, even if he is right.” And yet, some way, I couldn’t see it, and I cannot yet; for that freshman has proved himself most efficiently active in college affairs, and he has received the highest scholastic average so far this year of any student in the fraternity. I have the feeling that the chapter might very profitably allow him to express some opinions as to its conduct, and give him a little opportunity to develop independence.

The method of keeping freshmen under control by “tubbing” or “padding,” the ordering of freshmen about as if they were inferiors or without judgment, I believe in almost every case is bad and detrimental to the development of independence and self-reliance in the freshmen. I have never seen any permanent good come from regulations which prohibit underclassmen from smoking, or drinking, or going out, or from doing any objectionable thing which upperclassmen do with impunity.

“We send our freshmen to their rooms at half-past seven every night,” an indifferent upperclassman virtuously declared to me not long ago. “And



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what do you do?" I asked. I knew quite well that he spent much of his time smoking in front of the cheerful grate fire when he should himself have been studying, while upstairs the freshmen in their study rooms were enjoying themselves as best they could. It all reminded me of a senior who was very fond of "Pall Malls," but who thought it undesirable for his freshman brother to indulge in cigarettes. Every evening '09 sent young '12 up to his room to study while he remained in the living room to enjoy his cigarette. Upstairs little brother was not engaged solving algebraic formulae as was supposed, but was quietly puffing away at his own cigarette. There was no training for either of them in the procedure excepting the training in deceit. Fraternities too often consider themselves quite beyond criticism if in their various irregularities they can say that they at least keep their freshmen out of them. It affects me about the same as it would to have a man arrested for drunkenness claim immunity on the ground that his children at least were sober.

I talked only yesterday to a capable fraternity sophomore who has drifted both intellectually and morally since he entered college. I was urging him to pull himself together, to try to be something more than commonplace. "Do you think you have ever been of any real good to your fraternity?" I asked him. "I don't suppose so," he replied.

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“I’m only a sophomore, and I have not yet had a chance to do anything in the control and management of my fraternity.” I think it will not be hard to see that the system is wrong which allows a student to be two years a member of an organization without making him feel that he has any voice of responsibility in controlling or in making it what it should be.

The system goes even farther than this. If perchance a sophomore or a junior is initiated into a fraternity, even though he be a man of judgment and experience, he is often made to submit to freshmen rules, and to come and go as he is directed by those who in many cases are far less fit to direct and give orders than is he himself. I have in mind now the case of a young fellow, sensitive, refined, and socially experienced, whose feelings were tortured, and whose college work was ruined by the corrections and criticisms of his manners and social conduct by a senior whose social experience has been very limited, and whose standards of social etiquette were at best crude. It might not be so bad, perhaps, if these infantile methods were practiced in private, but, on the contrary, upperclassmen too often seem to feel that the greatest benefit will come to the freshman from correcting him, as an irritable parent might correct a naughty child, without reserve, before his friends and the whole chapter. This sort of

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public "bawling out" may silence the freshman, but it seldom appeals to his sense of justice, and it seldom permanently reforms him. It often rather confirms him in his errors and drives him secretly to practice the habit for which he has been openly corrected and humiliated. I have never really seen a freshman thus reformed by force who did not come back as a sophomore more boisterous and incorrigible than ever and ready to get even with the first freshman who should dare to call his soul his own. A private, quiet, brotherly talk as one man to another would usually result in a very different attitude. If the system is any good for the freshman it ought at least to be tried upon the sophomores who usually need it more.

My whole observation of the system which I have here been attempting to illustrate, is that its effect upon underclassmen is bad, and since underclassmen often finally develop into upperclassmen, the effect upon the whole fraternity is bad. If responsibility is not given to the man when he first enters the chapter, if his thinking is done for him, if he is treated as an inferior and a child, if he is not taught at first to think for himself and to develop his own principles, it will often later be difficult to put responsibility upon him and have him assume it. It will in many cases be impossible to do so. In the business of undergraduate college life more than in any other business that I am



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familiar with, the habits of life, the conduct, the initiative which a student develops during the first year or two and usually during the first semester, are those which cling to him during the whole of his college course. He can be led but he can seldom be forced. He can not be free from responsibility for half or three-fourths of his college life, and then drop into it naturally and effectively. Because he is kept from it so long is, I believe, one of the main causes of our having so many weak, inefficient fraternity seniors who are willing to hold office or to be at the head of affairs, but who are not capable of real, strong, efficient leadership.

In the direction of underclassmen there is little in laying down precept that is not backed by example. I have heard a good many "straight" talks from upperclassmen to freshmen which "went in at one ear and out the other" because the freshman knew very well that it was pure talk he was listening to, and that his senior brother was not himself intending in anyway to follow the precepts he was laying down. "I want you to understand, Dean," a senior said to me recently when I was talking to him about a disgraceful escapade in which he had been engaged, "that we did not allow the freshmen to have any part in it." But the freshmen were quite well aware that something disreputable was going on, they were keen to be in



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it, and their imaginations running riot had made the performance far worse than it really was. If the affair had to be it would have been better in its effects upon the character of the freshmen if they had been there.

I do not wish to be understood as advocating the theory that underclassmen should be on an equality with the upperclassmen in a fraternity. Other things being equal, the upperclassmen should rule; their two or three added years, and their greater experience give them the right to do so. My contention is that far too great a distinction is made between the freshman and the senior. ~~If the freshman is to be developed as he should be,~~ he should be treated as an intelligent adult and not as a child; he should become at once a real part of the fraternity and should be heard after the other members, perhaps, and his advice followed if it is good. He should be persuaded as a reasonable being, not coerced like a refractory truant child. If he is sent up stairs to study some one should go with him to show him how it may best be done. If there are habits of life which it is not well for him to form, then it is easily shown that it is not helpful for upperclassmen to indulge in them. The fraternity is to be a brotherhood, not an autocracy. There is at most too little difference between the ages and experiences of freshmen and seniors to make the distinctions that are usually made and

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no one sees the injustice of these distinctions more than does the freshman, and no one breaks away from their military school domination sooner than he. The coerced freshman can almost invariably be recognized in the incorrigible sophomore.

A large per cent of the benefit which comes from a college training, I believe, is found in the opportunity which the student gets for independent action, for developing self-reliance, for taking personal responsibility, and for working out his own problem. I have in another place observed that the student who lives at home while going to college loses very much of this training in self-reliance, and is usually on this account a weaker student. The reason is, of course, that his parents oversee his actions; think for him, and rob him of initiative. As I observe fraternity life I am afraid it is often furnishing this weakening sort of home life for its underclassmen, and the result is showing in undeveloped character and poor scholastic standing. Because he is not allowed to be a leader in any form of fraternity management, he grows to expect to be directed—to be told when to study and when to go to bed; when to get up and when to go to class; what to do and what to refrain from doing. The result is that he remains an irresponsible, indifferent child, who feels that until he becomes a senior there is very little for him to

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do either in college or in his fraternity; and when he becomes a senior he is quite likely to be confirmed in his lazy, shiftless ways.

I believe the remedy lies in throwing upon the underclassmen more responsibility, in holding them to a less military routine, and in leading rather than driving them to do the things that should be done. Fraternity men could do more with their freshmen if they worked with them rather than upon them; if they set for them moral and scholastic examples which are healthy and safe for them to follow and treated them as far as it is possible as if they were men.





## *Horse Play and Rough House*

### HORSE PLAY AND ROUGH HOUSE AT INITIATIONS

“I must run along;” said a senior to me one evening not long ago when he was making an informal call at my house, “we are initiating this week, and we have to give our freshmen a little work out tonight.” “Heaven help the freshmen,” I replied as I recalled the procedure which was followed at the initiations with which I was familiar during the first few years of my fraternity life, and those other tales of getting the freshmen into shape to which I listened as they fell from the lips of willing undergraduates who had lived through the siege.

It was great sport to send prospective brothers out on a quiet stroll to the cemetery clad in empty flour barrels, to set them to wheeling doll baby carriages about the campus, to make them fish all day, with a pin hook in the dry “Boneyard,” or to force them to beg for a hand out at the President’s back door only to get into more public and embarrassing disgrace. Such stunts always brought the fraternity into deserved prominence and served to convince the general public that we were the fools they thought us. There were other sorts of goings-on of which I have been told, some of them devised with the keenest insight into the methods of human torture, mental and physical. There

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were personal insults and physical abuse, such as painting the body of the victim, torturing him with electrical horrors, feeding him with nauseating messes, and beating him up to see how much pain he could stand without flinching or crying out. The fake violation of the oath was a form of mental torture which when worked skillfully made the initiate writhe. I have known boys who broke down and sobbed and who were upset for days by the memory of the disgrace which they thought they were going to suffer. All this we agreed was to put the freshman into the proper frame of mind and prepare him for the better appreciation of the ritual.

Occasionally some steady and sensible-minded brother questioned the advisability of continuing the practice, but he was promptly sat upon by some one who had been through the ordeal the previous year and who had been possessing his soul in patience until he could square the account with another brother. The fact that we had "always done it" carried weight, and it was years before some one was wise enough to insist that it was an imbecile and inane custom for which there was no justification. We gave it up, and now no one could be induced to go back to it. Like many another unworthy custom, tradition was its only justification.

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I think it is hardly fair, however, completely to condemn a practice so common as "horse play" and "rough house" without getting as far as it is possible to do so, the point of view of those most intimately engaged in it. For that purpose I recently talked very freely with a score or more of undergraduates with whom I am well acquainted, and in addition to this I wrote letters to the presidents of each of the men's social organizations of the University of Illinois asking them to give me in a few words their opinion of the effect of "rough house" or "horse play" preliminary to the initiation of pledges, with any good argument which they might have for or against it.

The replies to these letters were very interesting. Of the twenty-eight replies received sixteen were opposed to the practice and twelve favored it. In general local organizations whose rituals are probably pretty weak and inadequate were strongly in favor of the practice, and those national fraternities who thought it a mistake to omit the "rough stuff" from the initiation ceremonies were in general of recent organization with little or no traditions behind them, or the local chapters were without strong leaders. Such organizations have little else to depend upon to keep their men in line, excepting the "strong arm." Those who are most strongly against it were the organizations with definite traditions and dignified

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rituals or those whose leadership is vigorous and effective.

The beneficial effects of this rather coarse form of preliminary initiation, or the reasons it should be retained as a part of the ceremonies, are, according to the advocates of the custom, to keep up a worthy tradition, to teach the freshman his proper place, to discover if the initiate is "yellow," and to apply to his character an adequate test. One man says:

"In my own experience in watching freshmen 'put through' in the manner with which I am familiar, I give my unqualified approbation to 'horse play'. The average freshman is young, untried, and usually fresh from high school triumphs; his ego is largely developed, he does not consider that the fraternity is conferring a favor on him, but that his presence is largely a condescension. This last attitude is partly due to rushing methods and largely due to imperfect rearing by parents. He is distinctly not a man, and the fraternity must take up the task of character shaping where the parents left off or never began. His exaggeration of his own omnipotence must be dissipated, and as one of our own freshman puts it, he usually cannot reason it out, so other methods must be used. If he could fully comprehend the significance of fraternity ties, 'horse play' would be unnecessary; but he cannot do this, and more mater-



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ial means are necessary. Furthermore, the so-called 'rough house' is a means of determining what a man possesses, whether he has a streak of 'yellow' or whether he has stamina."

Yet this man admits that even though this trying preliminary work shows the initiate both "yellow" and without stamina, the initiation goes on just the same, and the man whose character has been shown to be weak is received with quite as much enthusiasm as if he had stood the test like a martyr. Indeed this is always true; if we admit that "horse play" in initiations is simply a legitimate attempt to test a man's character, we must also admit that no matter what the result may be the man always passes the test. An initiate may take a beating without winking an eye lash or he may show himself craven by bursting into tears and imprecations; when it is all over no one knows the difference and whether the new man has shown himself brave or a booby he is welcomed as a worthy brother. The alleged test, therefore, is really no test.

One other man says:

"Horse play, to be administered properly and with justification, should be given as punishment for some offence. Certain duties are required of the freshman, and certain rules are laid down which he must not violate. Usually these rules are sensible, and are designed to assist him in keeping

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up his work. Other rules are designed with no other purpose than to keep the freshman in his proper place in the fraternity household, and work no direct harm against him. If the rules are at all sensible, therefore, I think it right that whenever the freshman fails in his duties, or when he does things which the fraternity forbids, he must take his spanking, or whatever other form of 'horse play' the fraternity uses."

If this man's logic were to be accepted then only those initiates who had been derelict should be subjected to the unpleasant experiences of the preliminary initiation. If there are ever differences made, however, they are so slight as not to be recognized. The boisterous fellow is put through the torture because he is fresh, and the shy bashful boy is beaten to wake him up and to put a little life into him. The theory reminds me vividly of the methods of a quack physician whom I once knew. He had only one remedy. He might vary the dose or the directions slightly to suit different conditions, but whoever came to him for treatment, no matter from what disease he might be suffering, got the same medicine. The patients sometimes died, of course, but that might have been true had they not gone to him.

I quote, also, from a third letter:

"The purpose of 'horse play,' as I see it, is to test the candidates for initiation for those desirable

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characteristics which should be present in every good man. If there are any undesirable characteristics, such as 'yellow streaks,' they are very sure to show when a candidate is undergoing a severe test of 'horse play.' There is no doubt, however, that the 'rough house' element in many initiations has degenerated into a selfish desire on the part of a few individuals to get even with the pledge; hence the wholesale beating-up which so frequently occurs. From my own experience, I can say that a minimum amount of the 'rough house' element rightly applied can no doubt be a benefit to every pledge." Following the theory, perhaps, advanced by Bill Nye that "A certain amount of fleas is good for a dog."

On the other hand those who oppose "horse play" and who contend that the simple ritual is most effective give equally strong reasons. From some of these letters I quote.

"In the first case, a fraternity initiation should be a solemn and dignified affair; and 'rough house,' even though performed the previous night, takes away from the effectiveness and dignity of any initiation. Secondly, true men are sportsmen enough to do the stunts they are asked to perform without any paddling or beating. More effective methods of regulating and discipling an initiate can be devised. Thirdly, a 'rough house' initiation is not a great amount of fun for the men present,

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and, after one experience, a man's enthusiasm for such things generally palls.

“In the initiations I have been put through I think a great deal more of those that did not have the ‘horse play,’ and I have a higher respect for the organization that gave its initiation without the ‘rough house.’ ‘Rough house’ initiations are a dangerous sport, and serious accidents take place easily. I believe that it would be a good measure for fraternities as national bodies to forbid ‘horse play’ in their initiations.”

Perhaps the strongest arguments against the practice are summed up in the following, quoted from the letter of a president of one of the fraternities and one of the best respected fellows in the Greek-letter organizations.

“A fraternity is supposed, by those who know, to be a men's organization with serious motives and purposes behind it, and the ‘rough house’ is mere child's play. It is said that the pledges expect it—but one does not always get what he expects in college. One of the worst features of the farce is that it cheapens the real ritual. The freshman is very likely to put one on a par with the other and to consider the pledges that he takes as a huge joke.

“I do not believe that there is a great deal of danger attached to the ‘horse play.’ True, those who go through it are stiff and sore for several



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days, but one very seldom receives any lasting injury. Occasionally, however, we hear of someone's being seriously injured. Then the Greek world gets some unpleasant notoriety.

"In my experience I have never seen an instance of anyone's being benefited by the farce. It is not true that the initiates are treated with less severity than they would be without it. It always gives a fine opportunity for the gratification of any personal grudge, and the fellow who has gone through one is the same fellow who wields the paddle most lustily.

"People not in college cannot understand it, and with the whole Greek-letter system undergoing an attack as it is at present, the 'rough house' simply furnishes material for the opposition, and I, for one, am firmly convinced that it should have no place in our initiations."

A third man, whose fraternity ritual, if one may guess from its origin, is one of the most dignified among college societies, says:

"It is my opinion that 'horse play' arises largely from the lack of a well defined ritual. The more complete and impressive the initiation service the less will be the tendency to start anything in the line of 'rough house.' This sort of thing has a place only in an organization without definite aim or purpose other than the amusement of the members."

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Still another says:

“It is advanced that, when you subject a man to physical ordeals or cause him to make himself appear ridiculous, you probe his character. In my opinion, a man’s conduct under initiation is not an index of his character. A man may allow indignities to be heaped upon him merely because he sees it to his advantage to do so and not because of any particular goodness of character. The man of coarse sensibilities will smile; the man of fine sensibilities will feel insulted—neither will be benefited, nor does the fraternity reap any benefit.”

These opinions were to me interesting, and I present them for what they are worth. As for myself, as I look back over the experiences which I had, and as I have seen and heard the effects which these exhibitions or the reports of them have had upon the general public, I have come to see how common and vulgar the practice really is and how out of keeping with the real purposes of the fraternity. Anything which brings the fraternity or fraternity men thus prominently before the people who are not in sympathy with such organizations is sure to do them damage. The public “horse play” seems to me now a display of crude advertising which will only bring the fraternity into disrepute.

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When I was a small boy I remember that a merchant of the country town near which I lived offered a prize of twenty-five dollars and the minister's fee to any couple who would be married in his shop window at noon on the Fourth of July. Somebody accepted the offer and got the money, and to this day I never see a fraternity man capering about the campus engaged in some of the "horse play" incident to an initiation but that I think of that couple—crude, illiterate, without sensitiveness—standing in that public place before the laughing, jeering, unsympathetic crowd to have performed the most sacred and holy rite of marriage; and I always hang my head a little in shame.

As to the arguments in favor of "rough house," I do not believe that any man was ever permanently helped by it. Even though a man should prove himself to have a "streak of yellow" in him, that fact, as I have said never bars him. If he be too "fresh," the rough treatment may calm him for the time being, but he bobs up serenely at the next initiation, fresher than ever, and keen to beat up the defenseless brother who has come after him. If there are exceptions to this statement I do not now recall them. If the treatment were carried into the sophomore year, and the fresh or incorrigible sophomore were subject to discipline, the case might be different. The freshman knows,

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however, that the period of his probation is short and he usually breaks out worse than ever when it is ended.

As to "showing the freshman his true place," I have in another paper expressed myself on this topic. I believe that because of his somewhat wider experience the upperclassman should rule, but I have little sympathy with the feeling that it is to the advantage either of the freshman or of the fraternity that the initiate should be humiliated and insulted simply to establish the fact that the upperclassmen are in authority. I have always felt that it was pretty poor discipline even for parents and much less for fraternity men to be under the necessity to use force to show a child or a freshman his true place.

I think it is true, too, that such practices cheapen the ritual and center the thought of the initiate not on the seriousness of the ceremony through which he is going, but upon the probability of his getting a good crack across the pants as he is being led about by the fraternity officer. Even though the rough part of the initiation may be given on the day previous to the presenting of the real ritual, the initiate does not know this, and usually has his weather eye out for trouble. The seriousness of effect, therefore, I feel sure, is injured, and the real meaning of the ritual is lost.



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Fraternities will justify themselves only as they can establish the fact that their purpose is a serious one; that their members are men rather than foolish, unruly boys; that in taking men into their organizations they are taking them into a brotherhood rather than an autocracy. If this is their purpose, there will be no need of "rough house" and no place for the public "horse play" of which we have seen too much.



## *Fraternity Finances*

### FRATERNITY FINANCES

Whatever was once the custom, in these days, at least, fraternity men are expected to pay their debts and to do so promptly. The young man with the buoyancy and optimism of Mr. Skimpole, in *Bleak House*, who held that "the sordid word money should never be mentioned in the relations of friendship" is having little vogue at the present time. The enthusiastic life insurance agent, if you will admit his logic, can prove to you that if you will pay your premiums long enough they will cost you nothing, but every sensible man knows that the thing that is worth anything costs something, and the fraternity is no exception.

Fraternity men in the past have too frequently taken their obligations lightly, and so in a financial way have brought fraternities into disrepute. Fraternity officers have begun strongly to emphasize the importance of financial matters in the fraternity and are insisting upon the introduction of accounting systems into all chapters which will make it possible for fraternity accounts to be kept accurately and which will impress upon the fraternity man from the outset his obligation to meet his bills when they are due.

When a boy goes into a fraternity, neither he nor his father should be deceived as to the actual cost of membership, nor allowed to believe that

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payment may be evaded or deferred. It is ordinarily as unwise to go into a fraternity with the idea that the cost of living will thus be reduced as it is to enter matrimony with the thought that it will cost no more to support a family than an individual. With us at the University of Illinois the fraternity man is likely to be called upon to expend twenty per cent more than if he had remained outside of the organization, and if he develops popularity and contracts the joining habit, it may cost him considerably more than this.

The payment of bills and the meeting of personal financial obligations is quite as often a matter of habit as of monthly income. So far as I have observed, the man who is broke in college, who allows his bills to go unpaid, or who lets his fraternity brothers meet his obligations is not more punctilious about such matters when he leaves college and begins to earn a regular income. I held for five years the notes of a fraternity man given to the chapter for board, and though the man was soon drawing a good enough salary to enable him to marry, he has not up to this time been getting enough to make it possible for him to pay his old board bill.

Every organization has a longer or shorter list of these grafters whose pocket books and whose memories are short, who are careless or generous with their own money and who feel no compunc-



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tions of conscience at living off any one who will stand for it. Their excuse for not paying what they agree to pay or what they are due to pay is usually that they have had hard luck, that they have managed badly, or that they are going to find it easier later. The facts are that there is seldom any good reason except that they have lived beyond their income. It is the man with the small or moderate income who usually keeps his bills paid.

The men who are in these days giving most time and thought to fraternity matters are putting less and less stress upon mere sentiment and melodramatic feeling as a basis of true friendship and are coming to see that there can be no real brotherhood unless it is based upon principles which require every member of such an organization to do his part in keeping up the fraternity and to pay his part of the regular bills incident to such an organization. If a fraternity is to get anywhere, its finances are to be sound and dependable, and usually the finances of the group are determined by the way in which the individuals conduct their money matters. No one ought to assume more financial obligations than he can meet, but, having once agreed to pay, he is under moral obligations to do so whether it happens to be a subscription to the minister's salary, a chapter house note, or a board bill. That fraternity

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will do its members the best service and give them the best training which insists upon regular and prompt payment of every financial obligation. If a man can not pay he ought not to be in college. He should have pride enough not to allow himself to be carried by those who perhaps can afford as little as he can to meet additional financial obligations. I have had a good many interesting experiences with regard to the way in which fraternity men pay their debts. Possibly one of these, given somewhat in detail, may serve to show how fraternity men meet their obligations, and the methods employed to induce them to pay.

For a dozen years or more, as treasurer or trustee, I have been responsible for the collection of house notes and other pledges of three organizations—two fraternities and one sorority. These duties have brought me various experiences, pleasant and otherwise, and have incidentally resulted in my collecting \$10,000 or so for the three organizations. As a remuneration for the expenditure of my time and effort I have been permitted to come into contact with various sorts of human nature, and I have learned much as to how fraternity men and women meet their obligations.

The funds for the building of most of the fraternity houses at the University of Illinois have been raised in part through notes given by the alumni and by members of the active chapter.

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These notes are usually for ten dollars each and are ten in number, payable one each year for ten years following the student's entrance into the university or following his graduation. Sometimes only five of such notes are given. The keeping up of the payments on the house is usually absolutely dependent upon the fidelity with which the individuals keep their obligations, and failure on their part to that extent embarrasses the officers who have the responsibility for looking after the finances of the organization.

The form of the notes which I hold is legal, I suppose, but, though I have never tried to do so, it is rather unlikely that they could be collected by process of law, and so they must be considered more as debts of honor than as legal obligations. The form which has been used I give below.

CHAPTER HOUSE FUND      \$10.00.

Champaign, Ill., June 24, 1914.

Two years after date, for value received, I promise to pay to the order of THOMAS A. CLARK, Trustee of Chapter House Fund of Beta Theta, the sum of Ten Dollars (\$10), with interest at 6 per cent after maturity.

The proceeds of this note are to be applied to the purchase of a Chapter House, and will be used for no other purpose.      (NAME) E. E. FISK.

ADDRESS: Street....., City.....,  
State.....



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Though as I say these notes would be collected by law with difficulty, if at all, not many men care to have such obligations put into the hands of an attorney, even if there is little likelihood of his being able to collect, and so I have found that some men who are otherwise reluctant or stubborn about paying will yield rather than have the matter tested. Men will grow angry and tell me to try it, if I think it will do any good, but at the same time they will pay rather than suffer the humiliation in their own towns of having it tried. Human nature is certainly a queer thing.

Of the three sets of notes which I hold and have made an effort to collect, two were for purposes of raising money to pay off a debt some time ago contracted, and the other set was to help meet the expenses of building a chapter house. The former I have found more difficult of collection than the latter, for the reason perhaps that there was a less tangible and visible object for raising the money. Paying for something that is already eaten up, or burned, or worn out is too much like paying for a dead horse. The house was an object of interest and pride, an object which the men could enjoy, and come back to, and for that reason, perhaps, they more readily put their money into it. My experiences were similar in each of the three cases; but to avoid confusion, my discussion and my illustrations will have to do



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with the collection of the money for the house fund.

To begin with, the signing of these notes was entirely voluntary. The use to be made of the money and the need of raising it were usually explained to the fellows, so that they did not enter into the obligation blindly or through force. Not all the men signed them, and no men lost caste or favor who refused to do so. In the majority of cases the first note came due within a year after the student's graduation, though some were payable at the beginning of the sophomore year. Even though the man at first drew a small salary, or lived upon a moderate allowance, ten dollars a year could not be considered a very heavy assessment.

The work which I do in the attempt to collect these three series of notes is of course entirely gratuitous. There is no personal advantage to me in the collection of the money. I have paid my own notes as any other alumnus might. It takes time and often time which I can very ill afford. I have never received in return what the collections have actually cost me, and I seldom get thanks, even from the people whose interest I am trying to conserve. I have always felt that if I were willing to work for nothing and pay a part of my own expenses that I am at least entitled to a courteous reply to the letters that I write, but

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whether I am or not I often receive none. I have written men regularly twice a year for ten years and have never received a word of reply—and these men were quite able to pay. I do not care so much what they write as that they say something. I should rather have an impertinent letter than none at all. If they do not intend to pay, if they have lost interest in the fraternity, if they have objections which they wish to make to the management of the organization, I welcome all these various points of view. If they are hard up, broke, going to be married, or going to pay in a month, or even if they have no intention of paying and think I am a swindler or a grafter, I am glad to know, for all these things give zest and variety to an otherwise monotonous task. It is this dead silence, like a freshman just before initiation, that gets on my nerves. A good many of the men to whom I write are bankers, lawyers, or business men quite familiar with the courtesies and traditions of business methods; all that I want is that the matter be treated in a business way. I have always felt that a man who paid his own personal part of a subscription and who then was willing to spend his time and try his patience in an attempt to collect what is justly coming from me was entitled to most polite consideration from me. But quite the contrary is often true.

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It is a great delight to find an exception. I have in mind one man who always answers my letters with a promise of payment in the near future. He has been doing this for years, and though he has never paid a cent, I like him for his courtesy. He is a gentleman, if he is a liar, and I should a thousand times rather do business with him than with the fellow, who having given his word, ignores all communications advising him of his obligation, or who is peeved because having made a pledge he should be expected by anyone to redeem it.

The men who paid the most readily were not always the men who could do so with the least sacrifice. The man who was first to cancel his ten notes was a young fellow working for fifty dollars a month, who without notice from me paid the first five notes when they came due and then discounted the last five at five per cent, and took them all up. I have more than once been interested in seeing that the men who can most readily return to their alma mater to see a football game or to attend the annual dance are most likely to find it difficult to pay when a chapter house note comes due. Whether or not a man can get money is often determined by what it is to be spent for.

The men who have not yet paid a single note, though the entire ten are now past due, are in general prosperous fellows quite well able to meet these obligations easily. These men have never



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acknowledged any one of the twenty or more letters which have been written them, but if they should do so and should analyze their reasons for not paying and should put them down in black and white, they would probably resolve themselves into two. In the first place, upon leaving college these men moved far away from the scenes of their undergraduate life. In the localities to which they went there were few college men and few associations to remind them of the fraternity. Naturally, they thought less and less of college ties as they went on, and when the first letter came reminding them of their overdue obligation, they resented it and neglected it, and thought no more of it, perhaps, until the notice of the second overdue note came. Now an obligation of ten dollars is not so hard to meet, even by one whose income is small, and who is practicing economy, but when this sum grows to twenty dollars the strain upon the pocketbook is considerably more than twice as hard. To many young fellows the problem of meeting an unexpected financial obligation of twenty dollars seems so difficult of solution that he gives it up and thinks no more of the unpleasant business. When these delayed payments amount to thirty, fifty, or one hundred dollars, the idea of payment is unthinkable.

The second reason why men like those I have mentioned do not pay is found, I believe, in the



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fact that they were taken into the fraternity late in their college course, were in college only a year or so, never assumed, or possibly never were allowed to assume, any responsibility for its control and management, and so left college without much to tie them closely to the fellows left behind. The fraternity to them, seen in the widening perspective of the years that have intervened, seems little more than a boarding or lodging house in which they may have spent a few transient weeks. To send money to keep up such an institution seems to them a good deal like dropping it into a friendly rat hole.

The solution of the first of these difficulties lies with the man himself who should take his obligation to the fraternity seriously and who should meet it honestly and promptly as he would meet any other business or social obligation which he has assumed. He tries to excuse himself on the ground that such obligations are in a different class from ordinary promises to pay. If it were a laundry bill, or a bill to his tailor or his grocer, it would be different. The facts are, however, that such men will frequently dodge a laundry bill quite as readily as a house note. If they argue that the obligation to the fraternity is a minor one and that later obligations should take precedence, they will say that the laundress lost their hose and burned their best silk shirts in the ironing. There

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is always an excuse and a way out if one does not want to pay.

The second difficulty can be met by an active chapter which should keep more closely and regularly in touch with its alumni than most chapters with which I am now acquainted keep, and which should make a constant and strong effort to get all of the old men back as frequently as possible. The chapter can help, also, in impressing upon the men while undergraduates their obligation to meet all their debts with promptness. The average fraternity man, if on account of his financial limitations he were called upon to choose between the alternative of attending a formal party or of paying his overdue chapter house note, would seldom hesitate long in choosing the former course. Pleasure before business is too often his motto. The fact that I have no personal acquaintance with the tax collector does not, of course, excuse me from paying my taxes, but the fact that a fraternity man often gets out of sympathy and out of touch with his fraternity is to him an easy way to evade keeping his promises.

The excuses for non-payment which men give are interesting. As a rule I have found that the men who do not pay do not have the courtesy to offer an excuse, but simply ignore the obligation. The occasional man, however, having leisure and a stenographer, offers an excuse. Some men hold

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that money paid by an alumnus to a fraternity, like one's annual contribution to the pastor's salary, is a gift, payment of which may be withheld to any time which may suit the mood or the convenience of the giver. He feels that his "I promise to pay" when given to the treasurer of his fraternity still leaves him free to keep his word or not as he chooses. He does not stop to think that the building of the chapter house was based upon that integrity of his written word, and that if he does not honestly meet his obligation the chapter is often seriously and even irreparably injured.

Marriage, I have found, is considered by most men an adequate excuse for failure to meet any financial obligation entered into before the marriage occurred. When a man entrenches himself behind a little family, he seems to feel safe from any arrows of financial obligations which may be hurled against him. Even an engagement is considered no mean excuse and makes the man immune from the effects of previous debts as vaccination protects him against smallpox. If there are children, his fortress is invulnerable; nothing can effectively storm his financial citadel. More recently assumed obligations also are wont to take precedence of a chapter house note. The man who buys a farm, opens an office, goes into business, takes a trip to Europe, or spends money in any way, considers this a logical reason for not meet-

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ing his fraternity obligations. There are, of course, legitimate excuses, and these are generally offered and received in good faith. Even fraternity men suffer misfortunes, are compelled to meet unexpected situations, and fall victims to real hard luck; but they are honest and when the sun comes out and the financial sky brightens they come across with the ten dollars.

The men who never have to be notified, and their number is small, or who, if they forget, respond to the first call are the men who when in college amounted to something in the fraternity and in the college. The really strong men in the active chapter are the dependable supporters after they go out into the world. As I have said, the meeting of obligations promptly is a habit rather than an incident. There are, of course, exceptions to the rule, but as a general thing the men who, after they are out of college, meet their fraternity obligations regularly and willingly are the men who while in college did the greatest amount of hard work to make the fraternity what it ought to be. The fraternity notes with reference to which I have drawn these conclusions first came into my hands about twelve years ago, so that for many of the men the tenth note is now past due. As I look over the list of men whose obligations were met and who have paid up the entire series, I find few who were not as undergraduates a source of



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distinct strength to the chapter. They were men who realized their obligations, who took responsibility, who stood for the best things for which the fraternity stands. They were the ones who gave to the fraternity the best that was in them and who therefore received from it the highest that it has to give. Recognizing, as they still do, what the fraternity has done for them they are still willing and anxious to help in its maintenance. The men who do not pay are, on the other hand, usually the ones to whom the fraternity meant little or nothing, and who mean little or nothing to it. Perhaps the fraternity should be blamed for not inculcating in them higher principles, for not holding them while they were undergraduate members to stricter principles of financial practice, for not impressing them more strongly with the value of truth and the obligation to redeem every promise.

As to my methods of collection I have tried every sort of appeal. Sometimes I write a simple note like the following:

“Dear Brother Jones: This letter is simply to inform you that your fourth chapter house note for ten dollars (\$10.00) was due July 1st. As usual we need the money.

Fraternally yours,

\_\_\_\_\_.”

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Sometimes I try the persuasive power of broken furnaces, scaling paint, unpaid taxes, and summer loan dues, not that the fact that we need the money obligates a debtor to any greater extent to pay his debts, but only that the debtor sometimes feels that it does. I have called to my aid often alumni more prominent than myself with the hope that through the influence of their position and personality the purse strings of the negligent alumni might loosen. I have tried to reach them through the regular chapter letter. I have tried to touch their pride, their loyalty, their honor; I have even threatened at times, or dropped into irony, with about the same result in each case. Each sort of appeal touches some one, though no appeal that I have yet devised seems to be generally effective. Only a few weeks ago I wrote a letter which was characterized by extreme courtesy. I received a reply from one of the brothers in which he commended me for my directness and complimented me on my tone. It was the best letter of its kind, he said, that I had written. I assured him that I did not agree with him, for it had brought me less money than any other that I had written.

Last fall, when at our regular home-coming some twenty of the old fellows returned to see the big football game of the year, I presented the case to them, and they all agreed that it was not credit-

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able to the old guard. They passed some beautiful resolutions, got out a "hot" letter to the fellows who were back on their notes and all signed it. It is an interesting fact to note that though perhaps a dozen of the men who signed the resolutions and the letter were themselves behind in their payments, not one has sent in any money, and, so far as I can determine, not a dollar has come in as a direct result of the letter. It is easy to urge the other man to do his duty, to do it ourselves is not always so easy.

One who understands the job of making such collections as those which I am discussing may very well be thankful if he has a sense of humor; otherwise his temper may frequently be tried. I have been interested to note the attitude which the negligent alumnus often takes toward the unfortunate officer whose task it is to collect the money for the fraternity. Not a few fellows have the same attitude apparently as they might have if he were asking them for a personal loan or a gratuity. My ancestry and my general character have more than once been called in question, and all sorts of aspersions have been cast upon my reputation, simply because I have insisted on a man's paying what he had agreed to pay.

I have been asked often what percentage of these obligations I have been able to collect. This is a pretty difficult question to answer, since no



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one can tell that an obligation is absolutely worthless until the one who made it is dead. Even in this seemingly hopeless situation one can never be quite sure, for occasionally relatives may have a greater sense of obligation than did the man himself when alive, and may come to the financial rescue. Every once in a while a man pays, whom I have considered for years as hopeless, so that for me in this experience "Hope springs eternal." So far in the two cases in which the notes were given to raise money to meet a debt already contracted I have been successful in collecting in one case little more than fifty per cent, and in the other about seventy-five. In the case of the notes to help build a chapter house I think I have already collected about eighty per cent of the amounts due and may ultimately bring the percentage up to ninety. In this case the unexpected is always happening. The man comes back and sees the house, or his younger brother or his wife's cousin is starting to college, and, wanting to make good with the active chapter, he liquidates. Maybe he meets an old pal who stirs up his recollections of other days, or he strikes it lucky and has an unusually generous feeling. In any case something happens that makes him send in the ten or the twenty that gives me a sudden shock of surprise. It may be if I live long enough and study the problem hard enough I shall be able to collect it all.



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In the meantime I suppose that there are a good many unfortunates like myself throughout the country whose job is to get fraternity men to meet their chapter obligations. To help them and me I believe the active chapters of fraternities may do a good deal. While a man is in the active chapter he should be required to keep up all of his obligations. If he gets behind, his father should know about it. The fraternity is too often sensitive about letting parents know just what their son's financial situation is, and so an obligation which might often easily be met goes unpaid for years.

The fraternity as a whole should not go into enterprises which cost money without seriously counting the cost. House parties and formal dances, and banquets, and automobile trips are all well enough if one has the price, but when young fellows have to go into debt for these pleasures, they should choose the more simple life. "Are you going to have a house party this year?" I asked a fraternity man not long ago. "No more house parties for us, believe me," was his reply. "The one we gave last year has kept us on the verge of financial ruin all year. We've been trying to save on the board in order to make up for our social splurge, and we haven't had a decent meal for three months." He had learned what many of the rest of us have learned, that it is a pretty

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dangerous proceeding to mortgage the future. No one should be allowed to get behind, for no young fellow ever will have more money next month than he had last.

As to the alumni, perhaps one reason why we have not been more successful in making collections from the alumni than we have been is because the number of letters which our alumni receive in which they are directly asked for money is so much in excess of the number of friendly or newsy letters which they receive from the chapter that they hesitate to open their correspondence for fear of receiving a dun. Some chapters to overcome this situation have begun the publication of a regular monthly or semi-monthly paper which they send to all former members, and others send out a regular series of friendly, newsy letters.

Alumni should be urged regularly to visit the active chapter so that they may not lose interest in it or be ignorant of its affairs. The sooner the chapter gives its underclassmen responsibility and develops their initiative and interest in chapter affairs the sooner these members can be depended upon to have a permanent and vital interest in the upbuilding of the chapter, and the more likely they will be when they are in the chapter to keep up their obligations and pay their just debts, and the more likely also they will be when they leave the active chapter to meet their obligations to it.

## *Extra-fraternity Organizations*

### EXTRA-FRATERNITY ORGANIZATIONS

One of the most vivid impressions I received at the first fraternity Congress I attended was connected with the reports which the individual chapters made to Congress with reference to the conduct, progress, and achievement of the chapter. No facts were stated more eagerly and with more evident pride than those which recounted the successes of the "joiners," and which gave in detail the number of members in each chapter who in one way or another had become allied with an external or extra-fraternity organization. In the eyes of the fraternity man, it seemed to me, there was no honor so great as being bid something else, and nothing so much to be desired as to belong to an organization outside of the fraternity, unless it were to belong to a number of such groups of men. No matter what the organization was, the simple announcement that some brother had made it was enough to call out rounds of applause. Even the announcement by one of the chapters that two of the brothers had broken into the mystic circle of Theta Nu Epsilon was considered a matter for general rejoicing.

In reading the various fraternity journals which come to my table I am impressed again with this same attitude of mind as seen in the chapter letters in which are recounted the various social and in-



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tellectual honors which have been carried away by individual brothers. Among the numerous things which a man may do that will make him worthy of mention in the chapter letter none seemed to be seized upon with more eagerness nor told with more conscious pride than the fact that one of the brothers has joined something or has been offered a chance to do so. From a recent number of a widely circulated fraternity journal I quote the following from one letter with only the names of the men veiled:

“Blain has just been elected to the Red Headed men’s Club; Barlow is an Alpha Delta Sigma; Lane has made Psi Mu; Thompson was recently pledged by Tau Beta Pi. We have at present a representative in almost every club on the campus.”

I have wondered if this fraternity ever took the time to compute the amount of energy dissipated by this general scattering of the fraternity’s forces.

I have never been opposed to these organizations to which I refer; on the contrary I think I may say with confidence that I have in most instances approved of them, and in some cases have gone so far as to encourage them. The fact that we have so many at the University of Illinois may in a large measure be attributed to this encouragement, since I am placed officially in the strategic position of



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being able usually to secure the approval or the denial of the request of various groups of men to organize as seems in each case best. I have, however, never been quite sure that many of these organizations are of any positive advantage to the fraternity as an organization, though they may at times help to broaden the individual member and to bring him into more general prominence. Though it may help Smith to join Helmet and Jones to become a member of the Egyptian club by broadening their view point and bringing them into contact with a larger number of fellows, and throwing added responsibility upon them, yet the time which each must give to the outside organization may so divide his interests and take him away from the important duties of his fraternity that his influence and his effectiveness may on the whole be seriously decreased.

I know any number of fellows at the University of Illinois who belong to so many things that they have little time to give to the management and best interests of their fraternities. If there is company at the house Joe can not help entertain them after dinner because he must go to a called meeting of Scabbard and Blade; if a party is being planned or the matter of the house fund being discussed, he must be excused because it is the night when Klu Klux meets or Arcus has its initiation. And so it goes; when he is needed he is not to be found,

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and when he does appear at the deliberation, he is an irritation and a nuisance because someone must explain to him what happened while he was absent. This might not be so bad if the absent member brought back the fraternity something gained from his outside alliance, but this is seldom true. One of the most popular men I know in college has this year ruined his scholarship and been worse than useless in helping to run the affairs of his fraternity because he has belonged to so many things that his outside interests have taken all his time. He has been unable to do any work himself, and he has been supercritical of those who have had to bear the burden of running the fraternity.

Most of these extra-fraternities are secret; their activities and their legislation touch only the individual and seldom react to the benefit of the various fraternities from which the members come. We have at the University of Illinois, for example, a sophomore and a junior intra-fraternity organization. The members are not selected by the fraternities from which they are recruited, but by the members of these class organizations themselves. That is, most of the extra-fraternity organizations are self-supporting. It is not the purpose of a sophomore fraternity to help all the other sophomores in the various fraternities from which they come, but simply to have a selfishly good or helpful time among themselves.

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Usually not more than two or three members at the most from each fraternity are eligible to membership in these organizations. When these members come back to the chapter house from the weekly or fortnightly or monthly meetings there are often private references between them to what has gone on or subtle and unintelligible allusions which not infrequently arouse the interest of the brother classmen, even if they do not go so far as to develop petty jealousies. The fact that one brother knows something that he can not discuss with all the others, that he laughs uproariously over a joke which he does not feel at liberty to explain, or that he belongs to something that the others of the same class and attainment can not get into, even if these things are in themselves trifling, will often prevent that unity of feeling and action which would otherwise be easily possible. I have known frequent instances of the development of factions and cliques in fraternities, which have tended seriously to the disruption of the organizations, caused entirely by the misunderstandings and jealousies incident to the membership of some of the brothers in organizations outside of the fraternity. I said to a man not long ago, "What is the matter with your fellows this year? You do not seem to be working together." "Three of our boys expected to get into 'Crescent' and only two made it," he replied. "They have



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been a little supercilious and self-satisfied all year, and it has stirred up a feeling that has made harmony of action impossible."

The fact that the fraternity has no voice in the selection of the members which shall represent it in those outside organizations seems to be a source of trouble. "Do you think we ought to let Allen go into Yoxan?" a fraternity president asked me recently. "He is not logically the man for the organization, he already shirks obligations, the new organization will do him no good and is likely to do us harm." I realized that everything he said was correct, but Allen did not care to take advice and went into Yoxan just the same. If the chapter were consulted as to whether or not Brown is its most representative sophomore or Adkins should be elected to Keys, it might be different. The real facts are that it is not the fitness of either for the place but his intimacy with the brother who last year represented the chapter that determines his election. It is this fact which so frequently causes dissension, for even to the so-called "honorary" fraternity as well as to those which lay no claim to such honorary standing, it is often the weaker brother who is elected, since the fellow who spends most time away from his chapter and neglects his studies the most is not infrequently the most popular among his fellows



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and so most likely of election. It is the good fellows they all want.

The election of such men is an evil in two ways. It tends usually still further to weaken their scholarship and their influence in their own chapter, and it tends, as I have said, to arouse ill feeling and jealousy among the other men who recognize the injustice of such an election and are annoyed at their own failure to attain the so-called honor. The weak man who should have been strengthened by being given responsibility in his own chapter is able to dodge it often by pleading as an excuse the duty and obligation he owes to his extra-fraternity organization. He can find time to go to a meeting of the "Lambs," but he is too busy to study English or to look after the particular fraternity duty for which he is responsible.

It is argued by a good many men that these extra-fraternity organizations bring into prominence the fraternity from which members are chosen, and since those members come pretty generally from all fraternities, help to break down the fraternity lines, to reduce friction, and to harmonize intra-fraternity disputes and differences. I am not at all convinced that this is true. At the University of Illinois intra-fraternity organizations and organizations which are composed largely of fraternity men have multiplied materially within the last few years, and yet I can not find

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that our fraternities have more political and social unity than they formerly had. Political lines are still sharply drawn, and it seldom matters if two rival fraternities each do have members in the same intra-fraternity organizations; that fact does not keep the fraternities from lining up with the special interests which have attracted them for the last decade. A few evenings ago I was taking dinner with a fraternity which has for years been the political enemy of a second one with whom I had dined the previous evening. A junior in each belonged to the same extra-fraternity organization. It was interesting to me to see that although these two juniors were apparently warm friends, the general feeling of antagonism of those two fraternities as groups was as strongly marked as it had been ten years ago and before the intra-fraternity group had been thought of. In truth I am not at all convinced that this fact is to be deplored, and that complete unity would be an unmixed good. I believe that a healthy rivalry is a help, and that it would be a bad thing utterly to eliminate fraternity divisions. If the time should come when, in any institution, all the fraternity men should be on one side of a question, and all the "barbs" on the other, I should fear for the future and the influence of fraternities in that institution. A certain amount of disagreement and a certain difference of action is likely to continue and is

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really necessary, I believe, in order that fraternities may have their best and safest development. These outside organizations really do not bring about this general unity of feeling which they claim to attain, and if they did I am convinced would not have accomplished the worthy end that they think.

These extra-fraternity organizations are not infrequently careless as to their finances. The period of membership is seldom for more than a year or two, the officers of the organization are usually burdened with other duties, and the extra financial tax is sometime difficult to bear. The reason is evident, in a middle west institution at least. The average young fellow who comes from a home of moderate means has an allowance only sufficient adequately to cover his normal expenses. If he belongs to one or more organizations outside of his fraternity, this fact will considerably increase his expenses. There are pins to be bought and initiation fees to be paid and smokers and feeds and dances to be provided for. Cabs and cigars and flowers and candy which are incident to these gatherings run the bills up quickly, and it is not strange that the boy gets behind with his chapter account and that the extra-fraternity bills are frequently delayed or entirely forgotten. I am constantly having complaints from merchants all over town that the bills of these organi-



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zations are not regularly met, and I have no doubt that if I were privileged to examine the books at the various chapter houses I should find that in many cases the house accounts of these members are sadly in arrears. The boy who "joins" easily generally feels that by some Midas necromancy he will have more money next month than this and he spends accordingly. Only this fall I called up the treasurer of an organization which had been reported to me as impossible to get money from and his explanation of the situation was "It costs more to run the bunch than it is worth. I'll agree to get the fellows together and pay the bill, but we're going out of business." As I have been engaged in the writing of this article I have been interviewed by representatives of a dozen business firms—liverymen, managers of orchestras, dance hall managers, florists—all who have bills against officers or individuals of these organizations. When I see the men concerned they say, "Well, we have so many bills this year that we simply haven't the money, and the fellows want to put off payment until next fall." All this in the vain hope that next fall they will have more money and more than twenty-four hours a day.

I do not wish to be understood as opposed to these organizations; I simply do not look upon them as so unreservedly good as they are frequently made out to be in chapter letters to fra-



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ternity journals and in reports of chapters to fraternity congresses. I recognize the fact, as I have said, that they may have a distinctly broadening effect in that they may bring the members in contact with interests and individuals which they might not otherwise know, but these benefits are not without dangers. It is not impossible to meet the obligations entailed by membership in such an outside organization and at the same time be entirely loyal to one's fraternity obligations. My observation, however, leads me to the conclusion that the fellows I have known frequently are of little value to their fraternity because they have so many of these obligations outside.

Naturally, too, the character of the organization will materially affect the result. I believe that the fraternity man who goes into organizations other than his fraternity will be benefited most by affiliation with those which select their membership from the general student body rather than by confining his interests strictly to intra-fraternity groups. As fraternity men we cannot afford to be considered exclusive, undemocratic, unsympathetic with general student interests and general student thought. Our associations outside the fraternity, therefore, will be quite as helpful to us and to fraternity interests in general if we cultivate our friendships with men who have no fraternity alliances as well as with those who

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are so connected. The exclusive fraternity man if he would broaden his associations would be surprised to find how slight the difference is between the two classes of men, if, indeed, there is any difference at all. For this same general reason I have argued in my own case as a member of a college faculty that it was better for me to become a member of a few organizations composed largely of business men and men whose interests are outside of academic life rather than to confine my energies entirely to organizations of faculty men. The fraternity man who knows and associates only with members of the fraternities is likely to be narrow and bigoted, and to have the wrong perspective as to college men in general. He is likely to get the idea that the only men in college, or in the world perhaps, are fraternity men, and that the only fraternity men are those with whom he is personally and intimately acquainted.

In this discussion I have meant to exclude from consideration those organizations of undergraduates whose main object is alleged to be educational rather than social, such as department clubs, dramatic clubs, musical clubs, and clubs or fraternities interested in a special subject or line of work, though many of these are educational in name only, and are of use only as time killers. It is the distinctly social organization which I have had in mind whose only avowed object is to pro-

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mote good-fellowship, to furnish the members an opportunity to buy another pin, and to encourage regular getting together. I have a dozen organizations in mind at the University of Illinois which have no more serious purposes than these.

Besides the dangers, then, which I have detailed there comes with such organizations the danger of a lack of serious purpose. "What is the object of your organization?" I asked a group of young men only a few weeks ago. "Well, I can't say," their spokesman answered. "We meet every two weeks to smoke, we have a feed every once in a while, we give two dances a year, to get the fellows acquainted." He said this with an assurance that would carry the conviction that young fellows always gave dances with the avowed intention of getting acquainted with each other rather than of paying attention to the young ladies they brought with them. There was nothing serious or worth while that this organization had in mind to accomplish, and so it had degenerated into a smoke fest; there was drinking at initiations and at other times; usually some one got too much; and frequently the talk grew careless. The organization helped no one, injured some, and wasted the time of all.

"Tell us something to do, Dean," an official of an organization composed of upperclass fraternity men said to me only a few days ago. "We have

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our meetings, but we do nothing but sit around." Unless it has a definite object which keeps men interested and gives them something to do, the extrafraternity organization is not only useless but positively harmful. A group of energetic young fellows will not long remain passive. If as an organized body meeting regularly they are not engaged in something active, healthy, and helpful, they will before long drop into the things that are positively harmful and disreputable. If their brains are not busy, their hands must be busy manipulating some sort of gustatory or bibulous contraband or holding the poker deck. Instances and illustrations more than sufficient to justify these statements, but too personal to cite here, come to mind as I write these sentences. The possibilities of the evils which I have suggested multiply and are almost certain to occur when, as in some instances, the membership in such organizations is kept secret. Not having the incentive which publicity gives to such matters there is ultimately the temptation to do nothing or to do those things which might not safely or honestly be done in the light of day. With the membership of an organization secret or even uncertain there is the impossibility to fix responsibility, and the organization may easily become a menace. On the whole the fight that has been waged and is now being waged all over the country against Theta



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Nu Epsilon and similar organizations is based largely upon the fact that the meeting place and membership of the organization is kept secret for a part or all of the period that the undergraduate is in college. The fact that things may be done under the cover of secrecy leads many a young fellow into indiscretions and foolish escapades which he would otherwise escape. It makes it impossible for authorities to place responsibility where it belongs and tends to encourage license. It is for this reason that most institutions have come to the point of forbidding organizations whose membership is not revealed, and the action of fraternities against such organizations is based very largely upon the same considerations.

The initiation ceremonies of these organizations under consideration are often one of their most objectionable features. Having few traditions and in many cases a ritual hardly worthy of the name, they depend upon impromptu suggestions, and the initiation often degenerates into horse play and a sort of "slap stick" vaudeville. The public or semi-public exhibitions through which they put their initiates tend to bring all fraternities into disrepute in the minds of the general public, who do not discriminate in any way between the methods employed by the various organizations which have the name of fraternity, whether it is the Red-headed man's Club or one of the "Big

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Three." Having nothing definitely written to constitute a dignified and effective initiation ceremony these initiations are likely to be vulgar and brutal, undignified and bibulous. No organization with a serious or worthy purpose is likely to send its men, dressed like court fools, to trundle doll baby carriages about the campus as a part of their initiation ceremonies or to hunt for a dead rat lying in a fence corner five miles in the country. Such proceedings are discreditable to all fraternities, and fraternity men ought not to allow their brothers to submit to such tomfoolery. The man who has himself never belonged to a fraternity and who is fighting such organizations will be made with difficulty to understand and to approve of such idiocies.

At the University of Illinois no organizations have offended more in the direction of rough house and horse play than the so-called honorary fraternities in engineering and agriculture. The strongest advocates of the practice of beating up the initiate and wearing him out physically and mentally before initiating him are for the most part those men who are least acquainted with any beautiful ritualistic ceremony, and who think the only real way to make an impression upon a man is to beat him to a pulp with a ball bat. They labor under the misconception that the only way to make the initiate love and respect you is to inflict upon

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him humiliation and physical pain. There is, however, among these organizations, as there should be, a growing sentiment against these relics of barbarism, the only reason for continuing them being the illogical and inane excuse that "we always have done it."

My conclusions, therefore, drawn from pretty wide experience are that fraternity men join too many things and that extra-fraternity organizations are not an unmixed good. I do not believe that they should be black-listed, but I believe that the entrance of men and especially of fraternity men into such organizations should be given more serious consideration than has heretofore been done, especially in large institutions where the number of these organizations is likely to be considerable. Fraternity men should not take on the obligations of outside organizations without thought and consideration as to the obligations involved. Nor should they be allowed by those in charge of the fraternity to go into so many as will injure their college work or their usefulness and effectiveness in the fraternity. Joining these organizations often involves, too, an expense which many fellows can not afford, it imposes added obligation which may not easily be carried, and it frequently turns a man's energies to those things which are not only not helpful but which are positively detrimental. These organizations are

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best which bring fellows together for a definite purpose, and I am quite willing to grant that this purpose need not be purely intellectual. That organization is best which permits the widest range in its selection of men and which does not confine its selection to a limited class of fraternity men. And with all these limitations I think the fraternity man should be a conservative rather than a chronic "joiner."



## *Concerning the Brothers in Town*

### CONCERNING THE BROTHERS IN TOWN

The institution with which I am connected is located in a rural community between two cities, including those persons connected with the college itself, aggregating perhaps 25,000 inhabitants. The cities support two high grade high schools with excellent equipment. There are a good many well-to-do people in the community, and there is no lack of educated, intelligent fathers and mothers, regular citizens of the place, who have high intellectual ideals for themselves and for their children. It is a community for which I have the highest respect, and one in which for more than half of my life I have found it very pleasant to live.

Because of the excellent educational facilities, secondary and collegiate, which are furnished, there are a considerable number of transient dwellers in the two towns, who come from the remotest parts of the state and sometimes from the remotest parts of the world for the purpose of educating their children. Among this number are farmers, tired and retired, widows with only sons, prosperous merchants who have grown weary of the busy and exacting life they have been living and are seeking relaxation; anxious parents who have but one child to look after, or tender ones who have

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married off or otherwise settled the older members of the family, and who have moved into the college community to look after the youngest son. There are retired ministers and well-to-do widows, and business men with families who make an attempt to break into the active business affairs of one or the other of the two cities. It is on the whole an unusual and an intelligent community, with a large per cent of young people.

The two high schools are, therefore, well attended, and an unusually large percentage of those who graduate from these schools each June present themselves the next September for matriculation in one college or another of the University. Since there has always been the most intimate and cordial relations between the "Town and Gown," many of these students have been well known during their high school course by the members of the various Greek-letter fraternities, and upon their entrance into the University come up for discussion and consideration as prospective members of these organizations.

If these conditions were unique, it might be unnecessary to discuss them here, but this is, however, not the case. Many of the larger institutions of the country are similarly situated, and so very likely must meet problems similar to those which we encounter at the University of Illinois. Indiana, Purdue, Michigan, Kansas, Iowa, Cali-

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ifornia, Washington, Missouri, and even Ohio and Cornell, with a score of smaller institutions, are situated as regards the local environment much the same as we are, and no doubt each furnishes countless illustrations of the situations which I am going to present.

The peculiar environment of students who get their training in the high schools of a college town, in an unusual degree affects their fitness for consideration for membership in a college fraternity, and their influence and usefulness in such a fraternity, should they ultimately gain admission to one. As to whether or not I consider students better or worse material for fraternity membership than are those students who enter college from without the college community, will appear later in this discussion. Since my experience and my official relations in the University have been for fifteen years almost entirely with men, I shall confine my remarks and my illustrations in this paper to them, rather than to both men and women.

No one, who is observing, and who has lived long in a college community can fail to be impressed with the large extent to which the moral and social habits, the dress, and in fact, the whole life of the college student are reflected in the life of the high school student. The high school student and his parents would, perhaps, be loath to admit it, but



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the fact remains, nevertheless. This tendency may be seen in all high schools, but to nothing like the extent that is apparent in the college town. In our town the development of high school athletics, the formation of high school fraternities and fraternities masquerading under the name of clubs, the giving of class functions, and the general imitation of all the social and physical diversions of the college man are annually seen in the life of the high school student. Sophomore parties, junior promenades, and senior balls are not at all uncommon in the high schools of a college town. In many cases the graduate of such a school when he comes to college has little to learn of social diversion if not of social dissipation. He has learned most of the social tricks usually attributed to the college man. Too often the habits of life for the acquiring of which he has used the college student as a model are not the habits which will help him most, nor are they the ones which are most common among the better class of students; they are on the contrary those practices which are often most hurtful, which stand out most boldly, and for which college students are most commonly criticized because of their effect upon the pursuit of their college work. A college town because of the multiplicity of its social and athletic attractions has in many instances shown itself a poor place to train a high school student for fraternity



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membership. The high school sport in a college town is the last word in sartorial and social finesse, and the last man to settle down when he goes to college in his own town.

Because they have lived in an atmosphere of college customs, have mingled with college students and fluttered about the outskirts of college functions, these high school students often find little that is new or interesting when they change their base of operations from the high school to the college. They are blasé to the excitements and interests of college. They form a large percentage of those nomads in college who are always wandering about looking for something they can never find. They soon tire of college work; they get a job; or the college authorities tire of them. A young fellow came into my office only a few days ago to go through the process of formally withdrawing from college. "Why are you going, Fred?" I asked. "Oh, I can't find what I want," was the reply. It wasn't, of course, complimentary to our curriculum, but I knew that the real reason was that he had been sated with a certain pseudo college atmosphere before he entered. There was nothing new to him, nothing interesting, nothing to arouse his curiosity; he had seen it all years before he became a real part of it. He did not know it, but what he was really wanting was to get away from home, and to see college

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customs different from those upon which he had been brought up.

The college boy who lives in town occupies a peculiar social position. He can not break away from his old friends—in fact he often ought not to do so—and he has little desire to do so. He is still a member of his old local social clans, and he is usually eager to break into those of the college. Not all of his old friends are in college, and, having little to do in the evenings, they offer him the allurements of the old pleasures which he enjoyed with them when in the high school. All this time, too, the organizations of the college are calling for him and it is no wonder that he is confused. Too frequently he tries to be loyal to the old ties and to take on the new—a task quite as difficult, as satisfactorily at the same time to serve God and Mammon—and naturally he succeeds badly at both. Sometimes he clings tenaciously to the old life—which ordinarily means the old girl—and so misses one of the most helpful experiences of college life. Over and over again I have seen the college boy who lives in town sticking so closely to his high school associates, absorbed so completely in the interests of the town, that he knew as little of the college life as if he were living a hundred miles away from it. The hour in the classroom and the chance acquaintance which he might pick up in the street car on the

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way home were in the main the opportunities which he had for acquainting himself with college life. He left college a veritable stranger to its real home life and with only a few facts as the result of his four years of college training. Occasionally a boy living in the college town sees the wonderful opportunity which college life offers for the development of a new life, and makes the struggle which is required to break away from the old environment, and to establish himself in the new. He becomes a real part of the college life, and lives in it as other students do.

The boy who lives at home while he is going to college has another and quite as serious a difficulty with which to contend, and that is the influence of home. Most parents are so gratified at having their sons at home that they entirely overlook the tendency of such a condition to rob the boy of initiative and independence. I am sure I do not underestimate the protective value of the home influence at the period of a young fellow's life when he is in the high school. I think on the whole, however, that the average boy who lives at home while he is going to college loses in independence and self-reliance and initiative by so doing. I have no recollection of any young fellow who was strengthened, or stimulated in college or saved from loafing, or from other bad habits by having either or both of his parents with him. The mother

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who moves to a college town simply to look after her son is usually not doing him a real service. She may give herself satisfaction and him pleasure, but the result is usually of no real advantage to either. It is often a matter of convenience or necessity or economy that a son lives at home while going to college, and when this condition exists, it should be accepted and made the best of; but my experience has been that it is more often a handicap than otherwise to the boy in that it prevents him from looking after himself, from making his own decisions, from solving his own problems, from correcting his own mistakes. When he is at home he learns to depend on mother to call him up in the morning, and father to call him down at night, and he knows as he did in the high school that if he is going wrong some one will detect it, and call his attention to the fact. If any trouble arises in the college, father or mother—usually mother—is right on the job to probe into the difficulty, and to correct it before son has had a chance to know that he is in trouble or has had an opportunity to grow stronger by getting himself out.

All these things that I have discussed are of importance to the fraternity which is considering for membership the young fellow who lives at home. At first thought many of them may seem trifling, but they influence the character of these



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young men and connect themselves strongly with their influence and effectiveness when they become active members of the fraternity. On the whole, I believe the records of the university will show that a pretty large percentage of the young men living at home who have joined a fraternity have been poor students, and that relatively few of them have graduated. Of those men who have graduated there have been a few who have had conspicuously high grades, but of these I can count on the fingers of one hand all that have been of any material help or advantage to their chapters. The reason is not difficult to find.

The organization of the modern fraternity as I have before said, is the organization of a home, with all the obligations upon each member that such an organization implies. It is an organization which demands allegiance and regular help from every one in it, and this allegiance is not one that can profitably be divided. The married man, the man who lives at home, the member of the faculty who may still keep his active membership in the fraternity, are in a class by themselves and can scarcely hold quite the same relationship to the fraternity that the other members do. It may be asked what the fraternity has to offer to these other men and to the man who lives in town. In reply I should say that it furnishes him a circle of friends, it helps to connect him more closely with

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the college and college interests, and it frequently gives him social prestige and political prominence which he could not otherwise easily secure. In short it brings to him all the advantages of an organization as opposed to single-handed and unaided effort. It is therefore likely to be of more advantage to such a man to join a fraternity than it is to be to the fraternity which he joins.

The fraternity man who lives at home is likely to be constantly between the Scylla of home and the Charybdis of the fraternity—and between these two he will have a hard time not to go upon the rocks. If he is honest and sincerely desires to do his duty to each, he will often find himself between two conflicting duties—his mother will demand that he mow the front lawn while the president of the fraternity will as vigorously insist that he help wax the floor for the house party; his parents will complain that he is never at home, and the fraternity officers will regularly criticize him for never being at the chapter house. Unless he has unusual strength of character he is likely to be thought a poor son and an unreliable brother. A sensitive conscientious boy often sees the difficulty of successfully serving the home and the fraternity, and either gives up the struggle or gradually draws away from the fraternity, excepting when forced by necessity to visit it. Such a student generally helps to bring up the fraternity

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scholarship average, but he ordinarily does little or nothing in helping to exercise moral control or to further a strong internal management. "How is Gray getting on?" I asked a fraternity man only a few days ago with reference to a freshman pledge. "We don't know much about Gray," was the reply. "We see very little of him at the house, and we don't seem to be able to get him interested in fraternity matters." Gray was a man who wanted to be a student, and when I talked with him I found that he had decided that he could not at the same time successfully keep up his obligations to the home and to the fraternity, so he had followed the lines of least resistance and had cut the fraternity.

If on the other hand the town member is a little tricky he soon learns to play the home against the fraternity—or vice versa. When his grades are reported low, or his attendance is lax his fraternity president explains that they see very little of him at the fraternity house for he does most of his studying at home. When in a casual conversation with father I suggest a little more assiduous attention to the books, I am told the boy does most of his studying at the fraternity and that he is seldom in evidence at home. The fraternity blames the home folks, and the home folks blame the fraternity, and between the two the freshman evades responsibility, and soon flunks out of col-



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lege. It is largely the divided interest which brings about the result. He has two places to study, two sets of social interests, two homes, and he is loyal to neither.

“How are your town boys coming on?” I asked, a few days ago, an officer of one of our fraternities which has made a practice of pledging a rather large number of the local high school boys. “Wretchedly,” he answered pessimistically. “We’ve never had one that was worth the struggle we made to get him.” I could pick out a few illustrious exceptions during the last ten years, but as I went over in my mind the men coming from the local high schools who had been connected with his fraternity, I was forced to agree that in his statements he was on the whole pretty safely within the limits of truth. The too frequent result is that the active brothers who live in town either loaf between home and the fraternity, and so develop into lazy indifferent students who soon withdraw on their own initiative or at the suggestion of the college authorities, or they develop into serious students who stay close at home and do their work, neglecting pretty completely their obligations to the chapter. In neither case are they of much real advantage to the growth and development of the fraternity excepting in so far as the organization is able to shine from the reflected glory of the good student’s scholastic



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and political attainments. I have in mind now one of our most active students in scholarship and student activities who has in reality done little or nothing toward the development of his fraternity. He could not; for he lives at home and every minute of his time is taken up with his various student activities, his studies, or his home duties which are numerous. The fraternity has helped his social standing and furthered his political ambitions, while he has in return raised the scholastic average of the fraternity. In actual fact, however, neither has in any vital way influenced or helped to develop the other.

To refuse to consider these local candidates for fraternity membership is of course not likely to be thought of. Their social standing and the inter-relationships which exist between them and the present or former members of the various fraternities as well as their own personal attractiveness would preclude such an action even though the general thesis be granted that such men have in the past been of little real use to the fraternity. Their families often have high social standing and do much for the social interests of the fraternities. There is a remedy, however, which a few of our fraternities have been trying and which I think is in most cases a possible and a feasible solution of the difficulty; this is that the local man be required to live in the fraternity house as

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are the other men. The fraternities that have tried this method have found it satisfactory. The objection to the added expense which may be urged by some parents is in few cases a tenable one, since few parents of the young men who become fraternity members would be in any degree embarrassed by the relatively small added expense of such a requirement. Such a student could be given a regular allowance and be made to live upon it. He would be near home, and since he would be free from its duties he yet would have a chance to develop all the initiative and self-reliance of a fellow away from home. He would be a real part of the fraternity, and would soon assume the responsibilities which devolve upon the other men. As the situation now is, in a majority of cases the young fellow who lives in town takes little more active interest in the real running of his fraternity than he would in the operation of any other boarding house in which he might be taking an occasional meal. He comes around at intervals, learns to call the brothers by their nick names, takes an active part in the dances, but so far as bearing his share of the real burdens is concerned, he very seldom does.

Of the two classes of members who live in town which I have mentioned the shifty lethargic brother and the hard-working student who stays at home and sidesteps the regular visit to the

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chapter house, the former is of course much the less desirable, for though the stay-at-home may be of little or no service in helping along the business of managing and directing the internal affairs of the chapter, such influence and attainments as he has count toward the betterment of the organization and add to its prestige. The other type of man is a distinct injury; he is a good fellow who never gets the fraternity anywhere.

If the taking of town men into the house does not in all cases seem feasible or possible an alternative suggests itself. The man who can not come into the house and so assume his share of the fraternity's responsibilities, should be required positively to demonstrate his scholastic ability before he is initiated even if his initiation has to be deferred to the sophomore year. The boy who lives at home is, because of this fact, not likely to serve the fraternity or be influenced by it in anything like the same degree as does the boy who lives in the chapter house. For that very reason he should be made to demonstrate his claim to some superior ability before he is taken into the chapter, and the easiest way for him to do this is by getting at least an average if not a high scholastic standing.

The brother who lives in town is not infrequently, because of the very reason which brings his parent or his parents to town with him, a petted indulged son. The plan of making such a

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boy move into the chapter house, in the few instances in which it has been tried with us, has worked admirably and has developed in these young fellows more selfreliance, and has encouraged them to more systematic and regular habits of study. I believe that if fraternities would insist either that these local pledges should become at once a part of the chapter house family or if this is not feasible, before initiation they should demonstrate their ability to do first rate college work in all the subjects for which they are registered, most of the difficulties which fraternities are constantly encountering with the brother who lives in town would be solved, and the body of *fratres in urbe* might become as strong as we all wish it were.



## *College Activities*

### COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

I suppose if we could get at it in any intelligible way we should find that the general opinion is that college activities are bad for a man's studies, and that the young fellow in college who goes out for athletics or who gets on the glee club or the college paper is to that extent injuring his college work. In the same way, perhaps, since I do not myself play golf, I have never been quite able to understand how my physician, who is reasonably prosperous, can find the time to spend the most of an afternoon every few days chasing those silly white balls across a forty acre field. I should naturally expect his business to go to ruin, but it does not. Volumes of newspaper humor have been based upon the fact that the college athlete, especially the football man, is a poor student. We have all laughed blatantly at the worn joke of the college man who could pass nothing successfully but the ball. When a college man, who is in no way connected with college activities, fails very little is made of his delinquency. A personal warning, a note home to father, or the severing of his connection for a brief period, settles his case for the time being; and it is unknown or forgotten by the public. When an athlete or a man in other college activities slips up it is different. His failure is heralded from Dan to Beersheba, and may

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even be made the subject of an associated press dispatch. We all read, look wise, and say piously that athletics is becoming the curse of our colleges.

Many college instructors honestly believe that students are injured intellectually by engaging in outside activities, and not only advise their students not to go into them, but are really prejudiced against the fellows who do not follow their advice. "Are you still on the *Siren* board?" I asked a senior last spring. "Yes," was his reply, "but it would not be safe to let the Dean know it. If he found out, I am sure I should flunk his course." I was quite convinced that there was more truth than poetry in what he was saying, for I have known many instructors who found it difficult to "see" the man who was in any way prominent in college activities.

My observation over a period of several years at the University of Illinois of the men engaged in all varieties of college activities does not warrant this general belief, however. With us the average of scholarship of the men engaged in practically every form of college activity is higher than that of the men not engaged. This has been true of the men in football, in baseball, in track, on the college papers, in the literary societies, and in the various lines of undergraduate activity. It should not be forgotten, of course, that the

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University requires a scholarship qualification of all the men who represent it in any of these activities, but that qualification requires only that a man carry all of his work or at most that he carry it with an average grade of eighty per cent, while the general average of men is about eighty-two per cent, and the general average of those men engaged in college activities somewhat higher than that.

There are adequate explanations of why men engaged in college activities should maintain a higher scholastic average than other men. Knowing that they can not continue in these activities unless they keep up their work, they put forth sufficient effort to stay well within the line of safety. If they enjoy the college activity, they would rather work than to give it up; just as when I used to make my pupils in the graded schools rewrite their work if it was untidy, I found that they would rather do it neatly the first time than suffer the pain and inconvenience of doing it the second. There are other reasons, no doubt, why men engaged in outside activities are able to maintain a better than average standing. Having their time pretty well taken up they learn to employ it to advantage. They have no opportunity to become loafers; they develop concentration; they know usually how to make the most of a minute. Of



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them it can be said that the more they do, the more they can do.

It may usually truthfully be said that the men with the very highest scholastic standing in college are seldom found in college activities, though it is possible every year to point to the names of Phi Beta Kappa, and Tau Beta Pi, and Sigma Xi men who are at the same time leaders in college affairs. The reason that there are not more of these is because ordinarily if one would be a superior student or stand among the very highest ten per cent or five per cent of his class he must give himself unreservedly to scholastic matters. Last year, however, at the University of Illinois the valedictorian of the graduating class and some others of the honor men in scholastic lines were all found in outside activities. This was true in football, in track, in debating and in the college publications. We are just about as likely to find honor men in college activities as we are to find flunkers.

There are some dangers, of course. It is the man who is so carried away by outside interests as to neglect or ignore his college work and so to make a disgraceful failure, who brings discredit upon all those who go into college activities. One such conspicuous example will do more to confirm the opponents of college activities in their opinions than a dozen good students can offset. When the editor of the *Illio* or the President of the



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Athletic Association or the business manager of the *Illini* goes to pieces scholastically he not only injures his own interests, but he injures the cause of all students who shall later try for such positions. Those who argue against college activities will forget the scores of men who have done their college work well while carrying on legitimate outside work, and will remember only the two or three who failed to do so.

Some men overestimate the importance of college activities. They do not realize that however worthy such interests may be they must always be secondary to the real work of college. "I would rather be editor of the *Illini* than get my degree," a junior said to me only a short time ago. "I don't care particularly for my college work," another man confessed. "I really want to make the baseball team, and I am willing to do what work I must to accomplish this." Neither of these men had the right point of view. They were mistaking the real purpose of college activities and missing the main object of college training. A man might as well go into the drygoods business without the thought of earning anything but merely for the purpose of meeting a few attractive girls.

The custom now in most colleges, at least in most colleges of any size, is to award positions in college activities only after a somewhat prolonged competition, the position to go in the end to the

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man who seems best fitted to fill it. The method seems to me to be a good one, and as regards athletic teams where physical skill is the main feature, I am sure that usually the sooner the student enters into the competition the better it is for him. In such competitions as those which are engaged in by the students who are trying out for positions on the college papers, or who desire to be appointed to the position of manager of any one of the athletic teams, and in any situation where the man's appointment is likely to be influenced by the amount of time he has put in, I have frequently thought that it might be better if the competition were not opened until the beginning of the sophomore year. If a boy begins such a competition in his freshman year, he will find often a very strong temptation to slight his college work in order that he may show up well in the competition, and even though he may carry his work, he will have developed rather loose superficial habits of study from which he may suffer later. A case in point is that of a young fellow prominent in college activities who in his senior year went completely to pieces scholastically. The only explanation of his lapse is that he devoted himself so early and so completely to his outside interests that he never learned to study or to do really first class work. He came to his senior year with the development of a freshman and so

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could not do satisfactorily the work expected of him.

Another of the dangers which are attendant upon the going into college activities is the temptation which comes to not a few active students to attempt more outside work than it is possible or wise for one man to do. If the captain of the track team essays at the same time to be editor of the *Agriculturist* or the President of the Young Men's Christian Association assumes the additional obligations of baseball manager, both interests which each man represents will be likely to suffer and the men's grades will start rapidly toward the zero mark. College authorities are coming gradually to see that no matter how beneficial extra curriculum activities may be to the individual, it is the wisest policy to limit the number of activities into which any individual student may go. It will not be long, I believe, until this "point" system will be generally adopted by colleges so that the possibility of a student's injuring his work by too much attention to other things than his studies will be reduced to a minimum. Although as I said at the outset, I am a believer in college activities and am convinced that when entered into sanely they tend to develop good students with better than average grades, I should not want to ignore the dangers which lie in an unwise or a too active participation in outside



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affairs, and these dangers I have attempted to touch upon in the preceding paragraphs.

Under ordinary circumstances as they exist in college the fraternity man is more likely than other men to get into college activities and to control student affairs. At the University of Illinois about twentyfive per cent of the undergraduate men constitute the membership of the social fraternities, a large per cent of these being members of national Greek-letter societies. Sixty-five per cent of all men in student activities come from these fraternities. This means that there are proportionately more than seven fraternity men in college activities to one man not so connected. So far there has been no feeling that fraternity men are exercising undue control over affairs and no especial likelihood that there will be such feeling. Nor has there been any thought that the men belonging to a fraternity have been given preference unjustly or undeservedly by those who select the students who are to have charge of college affairs. It is simply that the fraternity men work harder for these places and are usually better prepared to fill them than are other men. There is a reason for this.

In the first place the fraternities are attracted more strongly to men who have done something in the high school to bring them into public prominence and to make them known before they come



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to college. Sometimes it may seem that they are attracted too much by these things. Even in the better fraternities which have an eye out for a man's scholastic standing, other things being equal, the fellow who has made a name for himself in athletics, in debating, on the high school paper, in dramatics, or in any of the various class activities has a better chance of being rushed and finally bid than has the man with no such high school record behind him. Though with us the man who goes through the first semester of his freshman year without being pledged to a fraternity has relatively little chance of making such an organization later, yet there are few men who come to the front in college activities early in their college course who do not have a chance to join one or more organizations even if their ability is not shown until the end of the sophomore year. The case of one of our prominent track men will illustrate the situation. He was an "unknown" when he came to college but developed rapidly during his freshman year. At the end of his first year he was bid by a local organization but refused; during the first semester of his sophomore year he had a chance to join two national organizations but declined, and at the end of his sophomore year accepted the invitation of a third fraternity. His athletic successes kept him before the student public and made him seem a desirable man.

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In addition to the fact that men are sought out by fraternities because of their reputation in extra-curriculum activities, most fraternities encourage their men to go out for something, or even compel them to do so. With equal ability only the fraternity man has a greater chance of success than do other men. He has behind him the enthusiasm and the support of an entire group of men; if he needs advice there is someone to give it to him, and if he becomes discouraged and begins to lag in the race there is always the fraternity brother to prod him back into the line and to insist that he stick. I have seen many a capable fellow who was not connected with an organization and who had every chance of winning a competition drop out because he had no one to urge him to keep in, no one to get behind him and push. There was with him fighting alone no possibility of team work. The winning of honors in undergraduate activities is seldom a matter of "pull"—it ought, of course, never to be—it is largely a matter of using one's head and sticking to the game. The fraternity man is made to stick and so most frequently wins out. There is frequently in the case of fraternity men such a pressure brought to bear upon them to keep them in college activities that occasionally I am forced to show men that after all their college work is their first consideration, and if something must be slighted

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- it should be the outside work and not the studies. When a boy comes to the point of thinking that his extra-curriculum activities are of more importance to him than his studies he has adopted the wrong viewpoint.

There is too often in the cases of all college men who go in to these activities a desire to make money, and sometimes a desire to make money at the expense of the activity concerned or to its detriment. The man goes out for the job for what there is in it, not for what he can get out of it exclusive of the money remuneration. I believe that the work done in many college activities entitles the student to remuneration, but I do not know one in which the money is the main thing or should so be considered. The money which a student may earn in any one of the journalistic jobs about college for instance, in my mind is one of the least benefits which may accrue from the holding of such a position. When students in college activities become too grasping for the shekels they have missed the real advantages which should come from these enterprises.

I have been in favor of student activities because I believe that notwithstanding the dangers to which I have referred they are in a vast majority of cases helpful to the student. It can easily be shown that the fraternity men who are engaged in the general activities of college are in only ex-



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ceptional cases the men who pull down the scholastic average. The real facts are that they help to raise the average; it is the loafer and the fusser who pulls it down. There is one college activity at least which can not be said to be helpful to a man's scholarship, and that is the sentimentally social one. The freshman who takes on a steady girl might almost as well begin looking for a job. He at least has little chance of helping to raise the fraternity average. The fellow who spends his evenings at the sorority houses polishing the furniture, or who early in his college course develops a "case" is almost invariably an unsuccessful student. The "merry, merry ring time," is for him usually not far from the time when he gets out of college either by request or through a waning of interest in his studies.

The successful man in any profession or line of work must have a knowledge of human nature, he must be able to adjust himself to all sorts and conditions of men. His success will depend quite as much often upon his knowledge of men as upon his knowledge of his profession. The young fellow who enters sanely into college activities develops resourcefulness, widens his acquaintance, and cultivates self-reliance. A friend of mine, a successful attorney and a prominent politician, said to me at one time that he got more real training while conducting his campaign at the Univer-



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sity of Michigan for the presidency of the athletic association than he did later when he ran in his home district for the state legislature. There is a training, also, in restraint which is beneficial. The man in college activities has less time to waste than other men. If he keeps his work up as he must if he continue in these activities, he therefore has less time to loaf, less time to squander in silly or harmful ways, and so comes out of these activities with more concentration, more self-dependence, and a stronger character.



## *The Fraternity and Scholarship*

### THE FRATERNITY AND SCHOLARSHIP

Excepting in the case of freshmen, I believe that the fraternity has had little if any effect until recently with us upon a young man's scholarship. It has seldom raised it above what it would have been had he not joined a fraternity, and I do not know of many cases in which the fraternity was responsible for a lowered scholarship. In many cases the fraternity was little interested in scholarship; it chose its men for other qualities. The young fellow going into a fraternity carries with him his own ideals and personality and these do not materially change simply because he changes his lodging place. The fraternity man may develop but the fraternity seldom entirely makes over its men. They may be brow-beaten or encouraged in some degree, they may weaken in enthusiasm, but the total effect is gradual and is not great. The greatest influence will come through the traditions of the chapter, and through the example of the upperclassmen.

I am reminded of a young friend whom I had twenty or more years ago who had procrastination down to a science and whose conception of how much indebtedness his monthly salary would liquidate was exaggerated beyond any sort of realization. He was convinced that no matter how many duties he postponed until the future there would

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be ample time for their accomplishment, and he approached the end of the month with the optimistic assurance that his salary of one hundred dollars would wipe out a debt twice that size. Sometimes when he saw the downfall of these false hopes he used to have a melancholy half hour, but there was for him always a solution in which he had complete faith. It was this. He was engaged to be married to a sweet young girl, and he looked forward to that union as a sort of new financial and temporal birth for him. "I'll be a different man then," he used to say. "She will change me completely." He has been married for many years, but his work still piles up beyond anything that mortal man could accomplish, and he still goes hopelessly into debt. Marriage has not changed him temperamentally any more than it is likely to change you and me, and what change it has made has been by slow degrees.

No more, ordinarily does a fraternity suddenly change the college man who goes into it; and the man who bases his hopes of mental and moral reform upon the fraternity is likely to be disappointed. It is likely only more strongly to confirm him in habits which he had previously formed. True, he is younger than the man who marries, and so, perhaps, more susceptible to environment and suggestion, but even he turns out of the old rut with difficulty. If he has previously



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developed concentration, if he has liked books, if he has really studied seriously before coming to college, he is not likely to be different in college. There is a distinct difference between the man who has obtained high grades through serious study and the one who has reached the same result through cleverness or quickness of wit without application. The young fellow who depends upon quickness of wit alone to get him through college will ordinarily not get far without disaster, and too frequently when such a man joins a fraternity the failures in scholarship which he may make are laid at the door of the fraternity. The hope of the fraternity lies in the character of the man it chooses, and in the ideals of scholarship which it requires of the men whom it pledges. Unless they have high ideals of scholarship as pledges, they are little likely to acquire them after they enter the fraternity. If the fraternity is to improve its scholastic average it must look to the scholastic character of its freshmen before they are pledged. A freshman's scholastic standing should be as closely scrutinized as his social and moral and athletic standing.

If I have read the early history of fraternities rightly they were organized for bringing kindred spirits together, for strengthening bonds of friendship, but most of all for the development of the best things for which college stands and among

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these primarily for the development of character and of scholarship. The early fraternity men were first of all good students with high moral ideals. We speak now of the Greek-letter fraternities and similar organizations as "social" fraternities, and more and more as time went on this social feature seems to have been emphasized until within the last twenty years, at least, most other elements in a fraternity man's life and character were forgotten. The man's social standing—meaning by that that his financial rating and his ability to dress well and to utter polite inanities mellifluously—was the main thing taken into consideration when he was being considered for admission to a fraternity. Second to his social standing his ability to enter successfully into the various activities of student life, especially his skill in athletics, was the main factor in deciding his choice. The good athlete could often get by with a pretty thin veneer of social polish. If his scholastic standing or his ability to do high grade college work was ever taken into account it was not done seriously. He was expected to pass enough work to keep him in college, of course, but further than this, his scholarship was not made a matter of much discussion.

Within the last few years the conditions have been changing. The opposition which has arisen in various quarters against fraternities has caused

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a gradual change of view point respecting these matters of scholarship. There has been a revival all over the country, of the former interest in the scholastic standing of fraternity men. There has been a general discussion of the subject at fraternity congresses and conventions, and fraternity journals, almost without exception, have been active in stimulating interest in scholarship and in formulating plans for its encouragement. Only a few of the most conservative and self-satisfied organizations have kept out of the movement, and they will come in soon or be discredited. It has now come to be a pretty well recognized principle that the college fraternity has little cause for being unless it is willing to do its share in promoting the interests for which colleges exist. If it has no desire to make scholars, it has little hope of winning the approval of the general public which it desires. We should get on faster, however, if more thought were given to a man's scholastic ability before he enters the fraternity, and less energy wasted in making it good after he gets in. The fraternity can discover if it wants to do so whether or not the men it wishes to pledge were good students in the high school or otherwise.

Different fraternities and different institutions have employed different means for improving the scholarship of members. Interfraternity associa-



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tions have taken the matter up, scholarship committees have been appointed by individual chapters to apply the goad to the brother who is lagging intellectually, general secretaries have been sent out by grand officers, letters have been written, prizes have been offered, and in every way conceivable an attempt has been made to stimulate an interest in scholarship. The fraternity that is not now interested in the improvement of its scholarship is dead to progress.

For years at the institution at which I have done my work we have been trying to impress upon the fraternities the necessity of bringing up their college work, and of pledging only such men as are likely to make a decent scholastic record. We have been successful to a gratifying extent, and now, from a difference at the outset of several per cent, there is practically no difference between the grades of men who belong to fraternities and the grades of those who do not. We require in October and December of the first semester, and in March of the second semester, a scholarship report on all freshmen and special students and on all other students whose work is less than five points above passing. These reports are made first to the office of the Dean of the College in which the student is registered, and the records of all undergraduate men are within a day or two forwarded to my office. As soon as the reports are



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in, some officer of the fraternity has a conference with me or my assistant with reference to members of the chapter whose scholarship is unsatisfactory, and we make such suggestions as we can for the improvement of the work of these students. Often I see the students. Students whose work is down in more than one subject are called to the office of the Dean of the College in which they are registered. Other students are simply notified by mail of their low standing.

Since these scholarship reports have been inaugurated, two things have contributed very materially in helping to raise the scholarship of fraternities. The first was the publishing in the college papers of the relative scholastic standings of the various organizations about the campus. At first those organizations whose standing was particularly low rather resented the publicity which was given to them by this method, and protested that it was unfair thus to advertise them. I have frequently had these men come to me at the opening of college and ask that the publication of the grades which have been averaged during the summer be deferred until after the rushing season was over, alleging that a low scholastic standing would serve as a severe handicap in their pledging the best men. It has been our experience, however, that having made a bad intellectual mess of it, the best thing in the long run for these organizations

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to do is to face the facts and make the best of them. If they suffer this time, they are likely to be more careful next. It was, moreover, quite easy to point out that no one should complain if the facts are honestly given.

The president of one organization which for years had been fighting for bottom place and which is now struggling with equal vigor to stand at the top, said to me that following the first publication of these relative standings, the members of his fraternity were actually ridiculed into an effort to raise their scholarship. An alumnus never came to town without calling their attention to the disgrace of being at the bottom; a member could scarcely board the street car without being pointed out as belonging to the fraternity with the notorious scholastic standing; even the girls "kidded" them, and the humorous column of the college daily made them the subject of metrical innuendo. It was more than they could stand, and so they began to pull themselves together. To a greater or less extent this same result has been true of the other organizations whose standing was poor.

The second thing which helped the fraternities to raise their scholastic standing with us was a regulation proposed by the local Interfraternity association and approved by the University, forbidding the initiation of any student into a frater-

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nity or club until he had carried successfully at least eleven hours of college work. Men might be pledged whenever the fraternity wished, but they might not be initiated until they had complied with the rule. The effect of this regulation was first to stimulate the pride of the pledge who, even if he were innately lazy would sometimes rather study than suffer the humiliation of having his pledge button taken away from him or the time of his initiation deferred because he had not carried his work. The fraternity, too, was roused in most cases to more than ordinary interest, and when it seemed likely that a pledge was in danger, stimulated him by one means or another until he could be made to bring his work up. As a result, the general scholastic average was considerably raised.

Much rivalry was soon aroused, and organizations began to resort to various devices legitimate and otherwise in order that their scholastic standing might not be lowered. If a man could not be made to raise his scholarship in a certain subject by legitimate means an attempt was made to persuade the Dean to allow him to withdraw from it. If this could not be brought about, then the student sometimes dropped the course without permission or absented himself from the final examination and so had no grade at all to form a part of the general average. In order to meet these two subterfuges we have for some time in



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making up the averages assigned a grade of sixty to all courses which the student dropped without permission at the time of the final examination. Sometimes when a fraternity has been particularly desirous of keeping up its scholastic standing, its officers have forced members who were likely to bring down the average and who had no hope of pulling up to withdraw before the end of the semester. It is not now with us an uncommon practice for fraternities to withdraw the pledge button from students whose scholastic standing is low and who show neither ability nor desire to raise it. The methods employed and the motives which the various fraternities have employed for raising their scholastic standing may not always be as commendable nor as high as we could desire, but we should not, perhaps, be over critical. The methods employed to get people into the early Christian Church and for keeping them there, if we may believe history, were not all that might be wished for.

Whatever the reason or the method employed to gain the result, fraternities are undoubtedly coming to have a greater interest in scholarship than they once had, and for this I rejoice. Since fraternities take only what they consider the pick of the secondary schools, there is every reason to expect them not only to maintain a scholastic average equal to the general college average, but



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to be considerably above it. Unfortunately this choice of the best men means too often the men with the best social standing and not the men with the best scholastic standing. The fraternity in the past has had too many fellows whose only object in coming to college was to get out of work, or to make an athletic team, or to play golf, or to be lead about by a bull dog. I asked a young fraternity man not long ago why he had come away from home to college, and he admitted very frankly that he thought he would not have to work so hard in college as he would have to do if he remained in his father's factory, so he chose college. In his case, however, the surcease from labor was only a brief one.

The fraternity has initiated too many men, also, who are hilariously content when they merely pass a course or do indifferently well in it. They are satisfied with being intellectually commonplace. "I do not see why father kicks," the son of a former Phi Beta Kappa man said to me not long ago. "I failed only one course last semester, and considering all the work I did outside, I think I got by pretty well." He was really elated with three grades which were merely passing, and his highest grade was only five points above the passing point. Students repeatedly say to me, "I want to pass all the work I take up, of course, but I have no desire to get high grades; I have no use for a grind";

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and they say it with certain pride and self congratulation, as if there were virtue in being commonplace. A lawyer, or a doctor, or a merchant who had no more ambition than this to excel in his special line of work would be looked upon as a joke or regarded as unbalanced. Every one ought to have an ambition to be at the top or at least some place near the top in any line of business which he takes up. The student, however, too often feels indifference toward excellence in scholarship or actual humiliation at the thought of doing well. It is the wrong view point, and it is one which fraternities are coming rapidly to see they can not accept.

The reason offered most often by fraternity men for their low scholarship is that students in a fraternity have more outside interests, more things which must be done, and so less time for their studies than have other students. They point to the fact that it is the fraternity men who are in athletics, and dramatics, and student journalism, and in student activities generally, and on this score justify their low standing. An examination of the records of the men at the University of Illinois, however, will show as I have said elsewhere, that the students who are engaged in university activities, whether they be fraternity men or not maintain a scholastic standing considerably higher than the average. The young man who was this

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year at the University awarded the gold medal for having the highest general standing in college activities and in scholarship was a fraternity man as were all of his competitors for this honor. It is those who have little energy in any worthy direction who are indifferent to excellence in scholarship and who think lightly of attainments along scholastic lines.

Fraternity men say sometimes in justification of carelessness or indifference regarding their work, or in explanation of unsatisfactory results at the end of a semester that they are in college for what they can get out of it; they want an all around training, and they do not care particularly for grades. They fail to recognize that the amount they get out of a course is measured—not accurately perhaps and not always quite fairly—but still reasonably measured by the marks they receive at the end of the course. A merchant might quite as reasonably say that he is in business for what he can get out of it, but that he of course does not care for the amount of money he is making. The success of his mercantile undertaking is measured no more accurately by the profits which he makes than is the success of the student by the grades that he makes.

Good scholarship is then the main justification which can be offered to the state or to the individual or to the organization which expends money

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to furnish educational opportunities for young people. Unless fraternities can develop an interest in good students and a high grade of scholarship, unless in choosing men they begin to pay more attention than they have previously done to the man's possibilities as an average student at least, if not as a high grade student, the fraternity ultimately will fail.



## *The Fraternity and Its Alumni*

### THE FRATERNITY AND ITS ALUMNI

There has been for some time, perhaps, a pretty general feeling that Greek-letter fraternities are more or less on trial to prove their worth and their efficiency. The general public has heard much in the last few years concerning high school fraternities and college fraternities, and much that it has heard is discreditable to them. There have been heated discussions in home circles and school boards, in school faculties and state legislatures, and the public, knowing little, has believed the worst, and has put all fraternities into the same disreputable class. The fraternities have been judged by the worst and the most foolish things that have been published about them. It has seemed to me that the alumni of college fraternities, scattered as they are throughout the whole country, may do more than any one else by sane influence, and sane advice, and sane conduct, to lift fraternities to a high plane, to correct the faults which even their warmest friends are willing to admit still exist, and to present to those who are outside of these organizations a fair exposition of what the college fraternity really stands for, and what it is doing.

The experience in college of these men who have gone out from the fraternity should give them an intimate knowledge of undergraduate life, and it

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should give them, too, a knowledge of the needs of undergraduates, their habits, their weaknesses, and the methods of influencing them. If the fraternity has faults no one is in a better position than the alumni to correct them, and no one is in a better position than are these men to set the fraternity right before outsiders, for having been out in the world a while they know what the world thinks and says of fraternities and ought to be able to meet the varied objections that are made to them.

“I don’t like your fraternities,” one of our old graduates said to me not long ago. “When I was in college we had only the literary societies, and they taught a man something, and developed a really democratic spirit.” Now I know very well, because I had belonged to the same literary society that he had been a member of, at a time when fraternities were not allowed in the University of Illinois, that the literary societies here, as is the case in many other places now, were quite exclusive, were not democratic, and that they controlled college politics with an absolute completeness that would never be attempted by the modern fraternity. My friend did not know the college fraternity, which is in fact very similar in many respects to the literary society as he knew it, and he had forgotten the character of the organization

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to which he had belonged. It is this sort of error which old fraternity men may very easily correct.

My own college experience has been gathered very largely at the University of Illinois and my illustrations will, therefore, be chosen in most part from that experience. I think it is safe to assume, however, that the majority of the larger institutions of the country, especially the great state universities, are similar as to fraternity conditions and that my own experience is in the main not different from that which I should find were I located in some other institution. At the University of Illinois, then, I find that our alumni have exerted both a helpful and a harmful influence. Many of them use every opportunity to aid the fraternity to develop in the best way, and others have been the most objectionable influence with which we have had to contend both in their effect upon the conduct of local chapters and in the general influence which they exert among men who have little first hand knowledge of fraternities.

In the giving of financial aid our alumni have always been active. It is true that a few are willing to ride without paying their fare, or to enjoy the prestige and the privileges of a good house without helping to build it. Some still owe their board bills, though they find ample opportunity to criticize the present management of their organization when they visit it, and some have



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made promises of help which have resulted only in worthless slips of paper; but on the whole the alumni have shown the keenest financial interest in the local chapter and have been generous beyond what might have been expected in giving money. They have helped whenever the local chapters have got into financial corners, and this help came at a time when it was most needed.

We have, at the University of Illinois, between thirty-five and forty fraternal organizations, the most of them members of national fraternities. These chapters are all organized in about the same general way and carry an average membership of perhaps thirty. The two oldest of these organizations have been in existence for thirty-three years during ten years of which they were sub rosa, and they have a body of prominent and influential alumni. A number of our chapters have been organized for twenty years or more, and the majority have been running for ten or fifteen years. A few are of recent origin, and so have a small list of alumni, but for the most part the body of alumni of each chapter is considerable and its standing throughout the communities in which the members live is excellent. Eleven of our chapters own comfortable and well-furnished houses. The plans for the erection of these houses were in each case devised by interested alumni, the money for their erection has come in large part from the



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alumni, and the management and control of these investments is in each case, I believe, now in the hands of a corporation composed largely of alumni. The building of these houses has drawn heavily upon the time and resources of a large number of men and shows a thoroughly commendable interest on their part. A number of the other chapters through the generosity of the old members are also in a fair way soon to have houses of their own. In many other ways the alumni regularly contribute liberally to the financial support of the chapters, so that in this regard the fraternities have very little of which they may legitimately complain.

I can not commend too highly the unselfish efforts which many of these men have put forth in their desire to erect chapter houses for their fraternities. Few of our alumni are wealthy and those few are quite as often as not unwilling to give liberally. It is the rank and file, the men of moderate means or men with small salaries who have given the money. Professional men just starting—lawyers, doctors, business men—have been willing to devote their time generously to these enterprises with no possibility of personal gain. In fact the contrary has often been the result, for the man who stands at the head of these house-building schemes is in no sense likely to increase his popularity with those who have been

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persuaded to help champion the project. Our success in building houses for our fraternities, however, shows that many of our alumni have been generous and unselfish in the matter of giving money.

But notwithstanding the importance of money in the management and the progress of the affairs of an individual or an organization, I have never felt that the whole duty of a parent was done when he furnished his young son with generous sums of money, or that a fraternity alumnus had discharged all of his fraternity obligations when he responded graciously to a call for contributions to the house fund or sent in a check to be used in defraying the expenses of the annual dance. The fraternity often and usually needs financial support, but it needs something more than this, if it is to get on. The active chapter of any fraternity should be able to look to its alumni for direction and advice and example in those things in which the older men have had the wider experience. The alumni should give character and stability to the chapter; they determine its family history and its standing in the wider sense of the word. In college, for example, that fraternity is often considered the most fortunate which can show in the college annual the longest list of prominent *fratres in facultate* or the most impressive list of brothers who live in the college community, or whose names

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can be found in *Who's Who*. At rushing time at least the alumni are often made one of the strongest parts of the argument. They are brought in if possible as show pieces, and the photographs of those who may have attained any degree of prominence are proudly exhibited. The fraternity who can show that one of its alumni is or has been in the presidential chair usually feels that its cause is won. The actual importance and worth of such members is sometimes small indeed.

It may be argued with convincingness by freshmen and by others who know little or nothing at first hand about it, that the alumni on the faculty, because of their sympathy with young men, their knowledge of the conditions surrounding college life, their wide experience in fraternity matters, and their specific interest in the local chapter, will be helpful and an uplifting influence. It ought to be true, but in too many instances it is not. A sensible faculty member who is willing to take a little time and to use a little tact could easily reorganize a chapter if he would do so, and yet make the members think that they had done it themselves. It is not difficult to find conspicuous examples of faculty men some of them prominent and all of them busy who by persistent and diplomatically directed efforts have succeeded in changing for the better the whole character and standing of their fraternities. I have in mind now two



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well-known men in this University—one the head of an important department and the other one of our most prominent executive officers—each of whom has revolutionized his fraternity. From one of these I received only yesterday a letter saying, “Tell me about the boys. Do any of them need prodding up or encouragement?” He knows the ins and outs of his fraternity like a book; he is acquainted with the weak brother, and he can lay his finger on the man who will take responsibility and who will accomplish what needs to be done. He gets all this with skill, and gentle diplomacy, and without the expenditure of a great amount of time. He is a busy man who drops in upon the boys for a moment and out again, and who says the right word when, to and whom, it needs to be said. He is helping this fraternity and he is helping all other fraternities, and is the sort of alumnus whom I am glad to encourage. The other man has accomplished a similar result, and from the bottom of the list scholastically he has helped to bring his fraternity into the list of the ten highest in college. He knows all the men personally, he has won their confidence, and his advice is asked and followed on all occasions. Much more could have been accomplished and that more easily, if these men could have had the coöperation of the other alumni on the faculty who, in many cases, had more leisure and who were under quite



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as much obligation to help as were the men who actually did the job.

Unfortunately, however, my experience has been that more than half of the fraternity alumni in a university take little or no interest in the personnel or progress of their fraternity, and would not even recognize their fraternity brothers if they should meet them on the street. They have their names printed at the head of the list published in the college year book, or it is engraved upon the program of the formal annual dance, but if they were suddenly ushered into the chapter house, they would not know Smith from Knappenberger, or the president of the chapter from the freshman who is being rushed, and they feel as lonesome and out of place as a blind man at a ballet. Every once in a while I fall in with these "brothers" who are invited out once a year or once in two years, perhaps, to meet the members of the chapter, and I watch with interest their struggles to get on, their embarrassment at knowing no one, their relief when the meal is over and they can get by themselves and discuss the present economic situation of the European war. I know a number of fraternities who count among their faculty members several men of prominence not one of whom could name three undergraduate members of the fraternity, and who do not in any way make an effort to help their organizations.

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I know dozens of members of our faculty who could easily find the time if they wished to get acquainted with the members of their fraternity, and to help brace up the chapter if only by their occasional presence, who know little more about the organization than the location of the chapter house. As to the real life and character of the boys they know nothing, and so the positive influence which they might exert for the betterment of the organization is lost.

The excuses given by faculty men for their lack of interest in their fraternities or lack of attention to them is most often that they do not have the time, but those who do find the time are often the ones who have most to do and who do most. Others allege that there is a certain embarrassment likely to follow any familiar acquaintance with individual students, and they wish to keep themselves free from these entanglements. If such an embarrassing situation does arise when a member of the faculty shows a little personal interest in the members of his fraternity it is more likely to be the fault of the faculty man than of the student. In all the years that I have been associated with students I have never known a member of the faculty to be criticized for showing too much interest in any individual student whether he were a fraternity brother or otherwise. The faculty brother is most favorably situated to

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give help to the local chapter and ought to do so far more frequently than he does.

The same things might be said with reference to the alumni who are not connected with the faculty but who live in the college town. The undergraduate looks perhaps with more favor upon the opinions and advice of the successful business man than he is likely to do upon that given by a member of the faculty who is, of course, in his eyes a mere theorist. A steady, sensible business man is a tower of strength to any fraternity if he will show interest. No old members of the fraternity are so favorably situated as are these two classes of alumni for directly influencing the chapters, and yet a distressingly large percentage of them assume no responsibility and show no interest.

The alumnus returning after a separation of time or distance is also to be considered. At every institution, I have no doubt, there are specific times of the year when a definite effort is made by fraternities to get the alumni back in force. It may be at commencement time, or at college anniversaries, or reunions, or at the celebrations of various college events. With us it is at the annual Home-coming, though any other event would serve the same purpose and might bring the same complications. The officers of the chapters send out letters of invitation to all the old members, a few of the local alumni—good fellows and unmarried

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usually—essay to help in the round-up, the attraction of a football game proves too much for the old timers, and they come back en masse. Such a return is full of possibilities. The freshman has heard of all these old heroes, and he wants to meet them. To many of them have come a measure of success and reputation, and the effect of their presence and the force of their words count for much in the life of the chapter. The effect of mingling with these men if they are healthy and sane and have the real good of the chapter in mind cannot be overestimated. But experience has shown that this is not always the case, and such a return is often a matter of concern to college authorities and to serious minded fraternity officers, for the returning alumnus, even though he has reached middle age, frequently forgets that he should have outgrown the follies of the freshman and too often feels that he must cast himself in the rôle of a sporty undergrad. The things he would not dream of doing in his own town and in his own house he falls into with eagerness in the chapter house. Instead of being looked on as influence for good and welcomed as a help in the building up of proper fraternity ideals, an effort is often made to conceal his escapades and the freshmen must sometimes be sent out of the house in order that they may not be a witness to his indiscretions. He does not see that whether he has



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been out one year or twenty in the eyes of the underclassmen, he is an "old man" who is to be looked up to as a hero, and to be followed as an example.

With us drinking and gambling are not allowed in the chapter houses, and all fraternities have definite rules against these practices which are pretty faithfully kept. "One of our alumni made so much betting on the Minnesota game that he is going to buy us a new rug," a freshman said to me not long ago. It did not seem to occur either to the freshman or to the alumnus that there was inconsistency in furnishing a house, in which gambling is prohibited, from the proceeds of money won by gambling. "The greatest shock and disillusionment I ever received," an upper-classman from a neighboring university recently confessed to me, "was to be called on in my freshman year to help put to bed one of the heroes and former athletes of our chapter who had returned to visit the college and the chapter, and who was brought into the house too drunk to help himself. All the influence for good which his reputation had had upon my life was wiped out by seeing him in that condition." "What are we to do?" the president of one of our most prominent fraternities asked me only a few weeks ago. "We have a house rule against drinking, but if our alumni are not furnished with something to drink they

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will be out of humor, will make us all unhappy, and will probably bring liquor into the house no matter what we say against it." One such experience will ruin all the good work which may have been done by the officers of the active chapter during the year.

Only this week I had a conversation with a group of old college men whose escapades had not been quite creditable and who excused themselves on the ground that what they had done would not influence the upperclassmen, and that they had not allowed the freshmen to take any part in the performance. It would be an imbecile lot of freshmen who did not know what was going on and who was either not ashamed of it or made worse by it. Not even the ritual sets before the undergraduate members of the fraternity the ideals of the organization as do the words and actions and general bearing of the returning alumnus. Without giving a word of direct precept he may yet leave behind him an influence and an inspiration which are immeasurable. If his return, however, is in order that he may live over again the follies of youth and if he leaves behind him the memory of a beery breath and a vulgar tongue he is not helping to raise the standards of fraternities as their best friends wish might be done. The sensible undergraduate officer of the fraternity always deplures such escapades, but he does not

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wish to seem discourteous to the returning alumnus or to make him angry, and he usually sees no way out of the embarrassment but to endure in the hope that the underclassmen will not notice the disgraceful proceeding or that he will be so disgusted with it as not to be injured by it.

The experienced alumnus may exert a powerful influence in the suggestion or advice which out of his wider experience he may offer to the chapter. Although the undergraduate fraternity man usually keeps in mind the fact that the responsibility for running the fraternity is on him and he wishes the alumnus also to keep this in mind, yet he is not averse to taking advice if it is offered at the proper time and in the right spirit. Sometimes, however, the alumnus, returning after an absence of many years, exaggerates the apparent faults of the chapter and attempts by a hammer and tongs method to correct them at once. Ordinarily he fails, and injures the chapter more than he helps it. Only a few days ago I listened to a young fraternity man out of college but a few years, criticising his fraternity most severely. He was somewhat incensed at me because I had found occasion to praise them for the stand they were taking in certain matters. "I jump on them," he said. "I believe in giving them hell; if they are praised it gives them the swell head." He could not see that being an alumnus he was an



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adviser rather than a director of the affairs of the chapter, and that the character of his criticisms destroyed his influence for good. Nor could he appreciate the fact that the chapter was in a better condition, had a better standing, and had higher ideals than when he was an active member of it. His presence was endured, but his advice, even such of it as was worth while, was entirely discredited.

I believe that those men who have been a part of the fraternity, who have worked for it and in it, and who have assimilated its ideals even though it be only in part, but who are now out of its active membership still love the organization though sometimes it may be with a somewhat dormant passion, and still want to help it. If the fraternity is to overcome present prejudice, if it is to reach a higher plane, it will be by the general coöperation of the members, active and alumni. In the world at large and in the communities from which our educational institutions draw students the alumni of fraternities are the only men who can truthfully present the facts about these organizations and who can correct the erroneous impressions which actually exist. They can spread the knowledge of what Greek-letter fraternities actually are, and they can better than any other men help to make them what they ought to be. The active chapters must draw their alumni and



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faculty members closer to them than they have heretofore done, and the returning alumnus must give his best endeavor to help the active chapter live up to its regulations and its ideals rather than to break them down in order that he may prove what a dead game sport he once was. The undergraduate members of a fraternity should be able to look to their alumni for financial help when it is needed, for some suggestion and advice, for examples of sterling self-controlled character which have been wrought out by striving for the ideals which the fraternity set up. In this way the alumni may do for the fraternity what no one else can do.



## *College Spirit*

### COLLEGE SPIRIT

A neighbor of mine is a man who has moved into town from a farm because, tired of certain deprivations of the country, he wishes to enjoy the conveniences of urban life. He is finically careful and thoughtful for the comfort of every member of his family. The smooth cement walk leading by his house to town, the paved street for his automobile, the city water system, and electric lights all contribute to his pleasure and the pleasure of his family. He does not object to paying for these because they touch his own life directly. General city improvements he opposes. He does not want a respectable city building, he voted against the new high school, he rails against improving the park system. He has family spirit but no city spirit.

When I first began teaching in the University I had an experience with a young fellow in one of my classes whom I detected helping another man short on facts through a final examination. When I demurred at the proceeding and asked for an explanation he informed me that the needy student was a fraternity brother of his in intellectual distress, and that loyalty to his fraternity required that he help out this mentally indigent man. I tried to explain to him that he owed certain obligations to the college to which he was

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disloyal by his dishonest acts, but I had a hard time to get him to see the point. He was impelled by misconceived fraternity spirit; he was lacking in college spirit.

Sometimes a man in his over-enthusiasm for an organization of which he may be a member forgets that the fraternity is only a minor part of the college, and that his obligation to the college should be first and foremost. It is this point that an organization does not grasp that is willing to run secretly in violation of a college regulation, and it is in this regard that a national organization finds its case indefensible when it permits a chapter to continue in opposition to the rules of the college. It is just the difference between loyalty to an organization and loyalty to the college.

The relative obligations which he is under as regards family and state and nation have confused many a man of mature years. It is not always easy to determine rightly which of a number of obligations should take precedence, which one has the most weight. Not an hour ago I received a letter from a man who had some years ago contracted a debt now long since due. Referring to this debt he said, "I can do nothing less than acknowledge that the debt to which you refer is a just one and one which I expect to meet, but only recently I have contracted other obligations which



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seem to me more binding—obligations which I feel must be discharged before I meet the previous one.” I might perhaps be willing to argue the question with him, but his is a problem which every man sooner or later must meet.

What one owes to the college and what one owes to his fraternity will continually come up for discussion. Many men feel that when they have met their obligations to their fraternity their duty is done. I have even had men go so far as to say that they cared very little for other fraternity men and they did not consider at all the men outside of fraternities. They can not see that it is the existence of the college that makes the fraternity possible and that far above fraternity spirit and loyalty to one's chapter is college spirit. The fraternity man helping his weak brother dishonestly through an examination may feel that he is imbued with fraternity spirit, but he has not yet had even a glimmering of what true college spirit means. Because the fraternity man is often so closely united to the members of his organization he more than other men sometimes needs to have his attention called to this general principle of loyalty to the college, for it will be strange if the time does not come to him when he will have to decide between showing fraternity spirit and college spirit. If the boy can see it rightly it is

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about the same as having to choose whether he will stand by his family or the golf club.

College spirit is a somewhat difficult term specifically to define. It is a commendable feeling or attitude of mind apparently, but I have never yet been able to get from any undergraduate student whom I have asked, an adequate definition of the term, though I have sought such information persistently. From the various scattered opinions which I have gathered, college spirit seems usually to be connected with an athletic contest, and is most violent in its manifestation at a class row. In the opinion of the average undergraduate, the man who makes the loudest noise, and who stirs up the greatest riot is indisputably showing the most intense college spirit.

The vast majority of maimed and injured underclassmen whom I, as a disciplinary officer, have interviewed within the last ten years have excused their condition on the ground that it was induced by a feeling of college spirit. If Brown's lessons are unlearned it is because he had to go to the Chicago game with the team, for "It's a fellow's duty to stir up a little college spirit," you know. If Jones is caught hazing a freshman or pasting illiterate and vulgar proclamations on every residence in town, it is purely an unselfish recognition on his part of a sophomore's duty to keep college spirit alive. If Smith comes home half tipsy, it is

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still another case of spirit. If after an athletic victory a crowd of students smashes into an opera house, and leaves the properties in splinters, throws a street car off the track, after having knocked out the windows to improve the ventilation, or paints exaggerated class numerals in the most public and sacred places, these are simply quite innocent methods of showing college spirit. And the thing about it all hardest to understand is that the young fellows who offer this excuse as an explanation of their depredations do so with the utmost seriousness, and seemingly with perfect confidence that it will be taken by intelligent, sensible people as a legitimate reason for making night hideous and the day to be dreaded.

It is true that most of the people with whom I have discussed the subject of college spirit have been young people in college whose judgments have not been fully developed, and who have been filled with a youthful enthusiasm which may sometimes have overbalanced their more deliberate conclusions, but not all the people who seem to hold such opinions as I have suggested are young. Some of them are sedate heads of families, and otherwise sensible business men near whom I may have sat at an athletic game, or whose tales of college escapades I may have listened to at a class reunion. Most of the evidences of so-called college spirit which the young fellow not yet out of high



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school sees in his elders or hears discussed by them consist of just such manifestations as I have indicated. It is no wonder then that the freshmen just entering college should come with the impression that college spirit consists mostly of noise and not at all of duty.

I make no objection to these methods of showing a feeling of loyalty to one's alma mater. I remember, however, being told when I was a young boy that the child who cried the loudest forgot his pain the most quickly, so, though I know that analogy is often the weakest form of argument, it may be true that the fellow who yells the most boisterously at the game is the quickest to forget his allegiance to the college when the opera house is being stormed. The development of real and genuine feeling for one's alma mater must be gradual. The freshman who comes to college, in the Middle West at least, comes with very little idea of what it means. In many cases he is the first member of his family to have a college education, and his conception of what such a training implies is summed up in a practical estimate of how much it will in future years be worth to him in dollars and cents. There is to him at the outset at least very little suggestion of obligation or of sentiment. These feelings, if they come at all, come later.



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"I was a freshman and desperately homesick," an upperclassman confessed to me not long ago. "Everything was new and strange to me; the big buildings confused me; and the thousands of students running here and there not one of whom I knew seemed to isolate me more than ever. I was a stranger, and the college meant no more to me than a great big factory might have done. I did my work because there was nothing else to do.

"There was a football game early in November, and I wandered out mechanically to the field. As the game progressed my interest was aroused. The team fought hard, but luck seemed going against us. Then suddenly Pogue broke away with the ball, dodged the man next to him, shook off a half dozen others, and made a run across the field for a touchdown. All my indifference was gone. Ten thousand people were on their feet and my hat was off, and I was yelling wildly as I alternately hugged and pounded the man next to me. I thrilled with a new feeling. It was *my* college and *my* team, and I had a part and a share in every building and every tree on the campus. It was the birth in me of college spirit."

Sometimes the feeling may lose the intensity which one has in youth. Time and distance and absorption in the strenuous duties of life which come to most of us separate us from the associations and the spirit of college life; new interests

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come into our lives and for the time being we forget the old. My classmates returned this year to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of our graduation. One man said to me, "When I got into town the first thing I did was to take a walk about the campus. I did not see a familiar face; most of the buildings were new since I graduated; the town was metamorphosed, and all the old familiar scenes were gone. What a fool I was, I thought, for coming back. I sat down gloomy and disappointed. A man walked by me looking about apparently as I had done. His figure was aldermanic but some way familiar. 'Why, it's Fred Waterman,' I said to myself, and I rushed up to him and introduced myself and shook him by the hand, and gradually it all came back to me. On Commencement day when the long procession passed by me and I heard the band playing and took in the beauty and the meaning of it all, I thrilled again as when I was an undergraduate. It was mine, this college, with all its wealth of associations and aspirations and ideals, and it had helped more than I could realize to make me what I am. It was mine and I loved it all, and no one could take it away from me." The feeling may wane, but it comes back again.

Sometimes, perhaps, the undergraduate fails to grasp all that the sentiment may signify. Two or three years ago, following a somewhat hilarious

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and widely advertised onslaught upon the theatrical business in the down-town district, the faculty, or the Young Men's Christian Association, or the Students' Union, or some well-intentioned organization at the University planned on the back campus a seemly well-ordered celebration and exhibition of approval by the undergraduates, following a baseball victory, with the idea of bringing about reform. Boxes and other inflammable debris were hauled to a proper place, the celebration was put in charge of a number of upperclassmen, and after dinner the student body gathered in a quiet and sober way to look on at the conflagration, and to listen to the yelling. Everything was orderly, and the enthusiasm was well under control. Standing near me was a young freshman who watched the flames of the bonfire unemotionally, and joined mechanically in the cheering. The performance was to him evidently dull. As the flames died down, the cheering ceased, and the crowd began to disintegrate, he turned to a companion, his face for the first time lighting with interest. "Now this thing's over," he said, "let's go down town and raise hell." He had caught, he imagined, an idea of real college spirit. College loyalty to him was best expressed through destruction and upheaval, a point of view, unfortunately, in no sense unique; he had missed the respect for



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the reputation and good name of the institution which comes from real love of the college.

The freshman perhaps may be excused for taking this attitude. At first he can be expected to have little real feeling; he can hardly feel himself a part of it; it has not taken hold of him. Whatever sentiment he may feel is a superficial one which is best expressed by noise. Certain college traditions and customs are most likely to impress on him more strongly than facts warrant the importance of noise as an expression of feeling. The freshman-sophomore contest or "scrap" is usually boisterous and rough; class contests in general are noisy and loud. More than anything else I believe that the modern custom of "rooting" under the direction and inspiration of a cheer leader is responsible for the over-estimate that is put upon noise as an indication of loyalty to the team or of college spirit in general. And this same cheer leading is with us in the Middle West becoming more and more freakish and bizarre. The man who can make a spectacular exhibition before the crowd is coming to feel himself a part of the show, and as a worthy stirrer up of college spirit he desires his expenses paid as is done with the regular members of the team. Omitting the fact that much of such cheering is discourteous to the members of the opposing team, and often intended solely to confuse or disconcert them, its



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advantages to the players it is supposed to encourage are usually negligible. The modern cheer leader can scarcely any longer be looked upon as an interpreter and a director of the real feeling of the crowd on the bleachers; he is in small if in any degree an inspirer of college spirit; he is the clown at the athletic circus who too often attracts to himself the attention which should be given to the main show. Such demonstrations have little to do with real college spirit. Nor can many of the things to which I have so far referred be seriously considered as either encouraging or revealing a love for the college or a respect for its good name; they provide means for the expression of youthful enthusiasm; they are an outlet—and sometimes a quite harmless one—for exuberant animal spirits, but they show, if at all, certainly in a very small degree, and in an extremely crude way, a real love and appreciation of the student's alma mater. There are other ways of revealing college spirit.

The man with real regard for the college will have respect for her good name; he will come in time to recognize the fact that wherever he goes he carries with him the reputation of the institution of which he is or has been a member, and that people who meet him judge of its character by his own, just as one reflects credit or discredit upon one's father and mother and all the members of

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one's family by one's conduct and character when away from them. A few years ago I rode on a street car from Cambridge to Boston with a young fellow, crude and half intoxicated, who was proclaiming loudly and persistently the merits of the west and the western university from which he had come. Even the placid New Englander looked up from the volume of Emerson in which he was absorbed and showed his disgust of the bad taste of this western rustic. I sank unobtrusively into a corner not wanting to speak lest I reveal by my dialect the locality of my birth, and thankful that my educational ancestry was not the same as his; and yet he thought he was showing strong college spirit.

College spirit gives one pride in the institution of which he is or has been a member. I knew a man once who came from a small country town in central Illinois. Nothing could have persuaded him that the churches, and the high school, and the water works, and the lighting system, and the city hall, and the skating rink in his town were not the most perfectly planned and magnificently executed of any in the country. In his mind the city library was the equal of the congressional library of Washington, and the First Presbyterian Church was the rival of St. Peter's. He had loyalty to his native village; he knew what it means to have spirit. In a similar though perhaps

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in a less blind way the college man should look upon his alma mater. He may see her faults, but he may not publish them. He respects her character and he is willing to protect it. He feels an interest and an ownership in everything that is connected with her. He ought not to be able to hear her name without a feeling of pride. If he feels otherwise something is wrong with him.

College spirit may sometimes even require that a man seem to sacrifice his own personal interests or the interests of his fraternity for the good of the college. I am at present together with other faculty men and students a member of a board that chooses the managers each year of certain of our college publications. The positions are much sought after, they carry with them considerable honor and a good financial remuneration. One of the candidates not long ago was a fraternity brother of a student member of the board making the appointment. When it came to the discussion of this candidate everyone thought that his fraternity brother would champion his cause and ultimately vote for him. On the contrary he said, naming the man. "I, of course, have a high regard for him, since he is one of the best friends I have ever had. He is, I think, however, not so well qualified to fill the position as either of the other men, and I can not advocate his candidacy and I can not vote for him." Here was a case



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where the good of the college was made to outweigh, as it should have done, the interests of the fraternity. The man's actions were an illustration of real college spirit.

College spirit of the right sort should induce a man to do his college work. We call the athlete "yellow" who shirks, who does not do his best in the game. We think him without spirit and without loyalty if, having the ability, he refuses to come out and help win a victory for the college. How much more then does the man lack spirit who having plenty of time and a good mind neglects his studies—the main part of college life—and loses the intellectual game which he could easily have won. The flunker and the man who does his work indifferently or in a slovenly way has no real college spirit—the feeling that permeates his system is simply an imitation of the real thing. College spirit should keep a man from doing the things which would bring discredit on the college. It should hold him to the high ideals for which the college stands; it should keep him from vulgarity and dishonesty, and if he is an athlete from discourtesy to members of other college teams with whom he plays. Wherever a college man goes he communicates an impression of the college from which he comes; if he has the right spirit he will want that impression to be a good one. The members of athletic teams, or of other



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college organizations, or the crowds of students who sometimes go with these teams, do not always realize that by their conduct quite as much as by their performance on a team, or a club, they may show themselves "yellow" and lacking the true spirit. A crowd of students wandering about the city of Chicago, or coming home on a late train, are given a more severe test as to their possession of college spirit than are these same students shouting on Marshall Field for the encouragement of a losing football team.

Real college spirit will induce one to make sacrifices for the college. There comes to my mind now a picture of an old man isolated by the distance of half a continent from the institution which he had loved, and to which he had given the best years of his life. His health had failed; he could work no more, but his last thought concerned the college and how he could best help those who, lacking means, yet still wanted the benefits of an education; and it was this thought of Edward Snyder that made possible the loan fund which has helped so many scores of students who could not otherwise have had the opportunity to claim Illinois as their alma mater. He had real college spirit. The football captain who keeps his life clean and his body in training in order that he may play a better game and be a more effective leader; the fraternity man who stays in at night in order

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that he may set a good example to the freshmen trying hard to learn how to study; the sophomore who keeps out of the escapade in which he would naturally take delight, but which would bring discredit and dishonor to the college; the graduate who is honest and straight for the sake of his college ideals; the student who by his life, and accomplishments in and out of college reflects credit on his institution—all these show college spirit. It is very little a matter of yelling, or of spectacular demonstration, it is a matter of standing by the college, and of living up to the ideals of scholarship and character which the college sets.

“It is a small college,” Daniel Webster said of his own alma mater, “but there are those who have learned to love it.” Sometimes, on a bright morning in September, riding in on the “Central,” the undergraduate returning from his summer vacation looks out of the car window as he sees the town of his destination approaching, and in the distance he catches a glimpse of the familiar sturdy towers of University Hall. He is getting back to college, and the sight of the old building gives him a thrill of joy; stirs in him an added desire—to be and to do something worth while; purges him for the moment of all that is low and sordid, and makes him want to do his best, to be and to accomplish something worthy of the college. That is college spirit.

## *The High School Fraternity*

### THE HIGH SCHOOL FRATERNITY

My first hand knowledge of high school fraternities has been gained entirely through a rather remote acquaintance with these organizations as they are seen in the local high schools in the two towns between which the University is situated. In one town there are no fraternities; they have clubs, however, which are more democratic I am told than fraternities, and do not sound so pretentious. The other town is somewhat more ambitious, and so has a number of fraternities for both boys and girls. Their social endeavors are numerous and interesting I judge from the accounts I see in the local papers, and the social standards which they maintain are high. The members come from the most prosperous—and so of course the best—families in town. Occasionally I hear rumors of the heartaches of those who did not get in or of the undue dissipations of those who did; but I know little, and I have had experience enough to be sure that much that I read is, perhaps, touched up by an enthusiastic and imaginative reporter.

Some of my more mature friends who have had the experience of belonging to one of these organizations during their preparatory or high school life have given me their view points with regard to the influence of high school fraternities upon young boys, but these views are so varied and con-



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nected with so much that is in each case personal that I have never felt that they were broad and unprejudiced enough to influence me materially in forming a tenable opinion of my own. So far as I remember the opinions which I have received have come from fellows who have lived away from home while attending academies or from others in small cities where conditions were somewhat easily controlled. I have talked to but few men from a city like Chicago who have been members of such an organization and who are far enough away from the experience to have a reasonable perspective.

Only a few weeks ago an old class mate of mine was recounting to me his preparatory school experiences. He had been a member of a small fraternity, and he counted it as one of the most delightful and most helpful influences of his life. The friends whom he made during the years of his secondary school training were friends whom he had kept into middle life and were the ones whose friendship he valued most highly. It is true that he was not at home while he was attending this academy and so had the greater need of close associations and the relationships and affiliations which a fraternity might give.

Another friend on the contrary said to me but recently that he considered his high school fraternity experience detrimental to his scholastic and



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moral development. It took him away from home, it required time which should have been given to his studies, it set for him false and artificial standards of living, and caused him when really only a boy to attempt to imitate the social habits and practices of mature men some of which were distinctly bad. It drew too distinct a line of demarcation between boys and too formally separated him, he said, from his companions who did not belong to the organization. He did not think it was worth anything like what it cost him. I have, therefore, had little help from my friends in attempting to form my conclusions as to the merits of these organizations.

As I have said elsewhere, the tendency to form into groups and to organize clubs is entirely normal both for young and old people. Whatever we may say or whatever legislation we may enact we shall have little success in preventing organizations of young people and of old for social purposes.

As I see the high school fraternity from a distance, however, and as I see the members of this fraternity after they have come to college, it seems to me that the organization may justly be criticized in various ways. Before mentioning these points of criticism, however, I may say in passing that in the minds of outsiders who know nothing first hand of fraternities and who are opposed to

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them purely on account of what they have heard or of what they have read in the newspapers, there is no difference between fraternities whether they are professional or social, whether they are organized in a high school or are conducted in a university. The college fraternity has been blamed in the past and will be blamed in the future for any and all derelictions of the members of high school fraternities so long as these are in existence. I have no doubt but that it could be shown, if one cared to make the investigation, that most of the sins that have been laid at the doors of college fraternities, had their origin in what some outsider has seen in the conduct of some members of high school fraternities or in what he has read with reference to them. To the layman "pigs is pigs" and a fraternity is a fraternity and as such to be condemned wherever it may be found. Much of the legislation in the various states against Greek letter fraternities is said on very good authority to have had its inspiration in some such episode as I have referred to.

The first criticism which I should make upon the high school fraternity as I have received an impression from a distance, is that the organization subserves little good purpose. One of the main purposes of the college fraternity, as I have said elsewhere, is to develop relationships and associations which form a substitute for home life in the

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case of young fellows in college who are away from home and home influences. The ordinary high school fraternity can not do this. On the contrary instead of emphasizing the discipline and influences of home, it tends very often to take a boy away from home and in extreme cases to break down the influence of home. It is too artificial for children in their first or second year in the high school to become members of so formal an organization as are most of the organizations I have known or have been told about. It is an old-fashioned view, I am aware, but, when I hear of the gallivanting around of these children or see the account of their social escapades in the paper, I always feel that they should be sent to bed sanely at nine rather than allowed to give house parties and formal dances and dinners as they now do. Their organization seems to me too rigid, too set, too inflexible, and too much like the cut and dried organizations of grown-ups. There is nothing of the healthy simple life of children in it.

The expense, also, even for people of means is by no means inconsiderable. Cabs and candy, flowers and party clothes all count up pretty rapidly, and nothing is too good for these young sports. I looked over one of these fourteen-year-olds not long ago starting out in his tuxedo to an all night fraternity show at about the time some one should have been tucking him into bed and kiss-



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ing him good night, and I could not help but ask myself what he would be doing when he really reached manhood. Besides the extravagance, the struggle to emulate all the social gyrations of adult life which these youngsters engage in, there is often I have no doubt real dissipation, for the step from extravagance to dissipation is only a short one. I have more than enough examples of the high school fraternity man who has brought with him to college all the evil results of drinking, gambling, and disease acquired through his relationship in his high school fraternity. But even if this story of dissipation were not true, beginning so early to run the social gamut robs the child of many of the real social pleasures to which he is later entitled, and for which his taste has been sated by his too easy and too intemperate indulgence. If the fraternity in the high school were an organization for children, I should not so much complain; it is, however, an organization as I have seen it in which children imitate all the social indiscretions of adults.

In college I have had considerable opportunity to observe the young man after he has graduated from the high school fraternity and has begun his college career, and my criticism of the high school fraternity man is based for the most part upon the fact that his life in the high school fraternity seems not to have fitted him to get the most out of



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his life in college. Fraternity officers all over the country would not have taken the action they have done ultimately barring him from membership in the Greek-letter fraternity if they had not felt that he was a poor candidate for admission to that organization. The opposition to high school fraternities on the part of the Interfraternity Conference is the result of a considerable experience with high school fraternity men and a study of their fitness for activity in real fraternity life.

The high school fraternity is apparently in little or no sense a real brotherhood. Its purposes are not to bring men closer together, to inculcate in them high ideals of morality and scholarship, or to throw around them the protection and the influences of home. Membership does not demand the sacrifice of each for the good of the whole; there is little thought of the development of the individual through his assuming responsibility for the management and the control of the others. All this responsibility, if it is assumed by any one, is taken by the parents or the guardians of these boys who for the most part at least are living at home and who are supposedly subject to the government of home. The main purpose of the organization seems to be to furnish an opportunity to its members to exercise their social proclivities, to have a good time, and to shirk rather than to develop responsibility. The furnishing of a home

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and the development of the restraints and the influences of home life, the formation of definite habits and principles of character which seem to me the main object and purpose of the Greek-letter fraternity in college and of other societies organized upon the same general basis is, in the high school fraternity, entirely lacking. This is in my mind the circumstance and the condition which discredits the high school fraternity man and makes him undesirable for consideration for fraternity membership when he comes to college.

My observation of the high school fraternity man after he comes to college is that as a rule he is an indifferent student. At home he has been a somewhat indulged boy, and in the high school he has devoted himself to social activities and to outside things rather than to the development of even good not to say excellent scholarship. He usually comes to college with little scholastic ambition and little respect for the man who wants to be something more than commonplace in his studies. He is often one of those who advocate "getting something more out of college than grades" though what that mythical something is it is frequently difficult to determine. He very frequently is the fellow who because of his indifference and his inability to "get down to work" succeeds in keeping down the scholastic average of the organization to which he may become allied,

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and he manages frequently to finish up his work in college by the end of the first year.

He is not infrequently an athlete, and if he keeps himself morally clean and physically free from disease—which he does not always do—he may achieve some athletic success when he gets to college and may derive considerable newspaper notoriety and advertising as a result. The college athlete, however, is in many cases a poor fraternity man in so far as his influence within the chapter, and his control of chapter difficulties is concerned. It is true he is frequently sought for because of the prestige which it is thought his achievements will give to the chapter, but his time is usually so taken up with his athletic training and his athletic practice that he has little or no time to devote to really helping run the fraternity. Since the high school fraternity does not demand much control and initiative on the part of its members and officers excepting such as have to do with social matters, when the high school man arrives at college he feels himself familiar with fraternity matters but he has had so little practice in fraternity management that he seldom takes this part of fraternity life with any seriousness.

Society is usually his strong lead. He has some social finesse, he is socially wise and experienced, and he drops easily into the rôle of the fusser.



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He is regularly on hand at the open house; he develops unusual skill and effectiveness in polishing up the furniture at sorority functions; he is a ladies' man from the outset, but he often lacks seriousness of purpose. The fraternity to him is too often only an opportunity to get into society and to wear another pin.

As I look over the list of the real leaders in our college community—the upperclassmen who have counted or who are counting for something—I see that few of them are high school fraternity men. One must have staying qualities to get much of anywhere in college or in life. One must have, too, a serious purpose and push enough to carry it through. The high school fraternity man makes a good showing when he first appears in college; he has social talents, he talks well, he gives the hand gracefully, he makes a hit with the girls. But his enthusiasm wanes, he is frequently not a sticker, he falls behind, and he drops out or is dropped out to take a job or a position with father.

The reason is that his high school experience has not prepared him for real fraternity life or real college life; it has not set for him ideals of scholarship, ideals of home life; it has not trained him seriously to accept responsibility. The ideas of fraternity life which he brings with him to college are that the fraternity is simply a social club



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where boys may have a good time, when in fact, if it is to get any where, the fraternity is an organization of men in which character and scholarship and a healthy home life are to be fostered and in which social activities are only incidental. Coming as he does with his harmful experience and his erroneous ideas, it is difficult and in many cases impossible to change his viewpoint and to enlist his coöperation. It is for these reasons that it has seemed to me that on the whole the high school fraternity man is likely to be a second class investment for a college fraternity.



## *Fraternity Ideals*

### FRATERNITY IDEALS

We had been listening to one of the grand officers of the fraternity as he presented forcefully and appealingly the best things which the fraternity had done and the best things for which it stands. We were silent for a moment after he had finished, overcome, perhaps, by the power of his words. My companion broke the silence.

“I had never realized” he said, “how real and vital these principles are which we advocate, how closely they touch the best things of life. Unless it has ideals and lives up to them, the fraternity has no place in college life.” And so we all say, I have no doubt, if we have given these matters serious consideration.

The men who organized our Greek-letter fraternities were almost without exception men with a vision of the future. They had high conceptions of right and honor and scholarship, and they wrought these principles into the rituals and the ideals of the organizations. For the most part they were religious men with reverence for God and with respect for the principles of the Christian Church. Some of the regulations of these organizations went so far I am told, and still do, as to require membership in a protestant church as a necessary qualification for membership. The purposes of these organizations were social it is

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true, but they were much more than the word social would seem to imply; they had in view, most of all, the development of character, and they set before their members then, as they do today, the highest moral, social, and scholastic ideals.

It is true that I know but one fraternity ritual well enough to speak with authority as to what these organizations stand for, but my relations with the members and the officers of a score of others have been so close, and I have learned so much from inference, that I am safe, I am sure, in saying that the principles laid down in all of these statements of faith and practice of Greek-letter organizations are not in their expression essentially different. I can say for the ritual with which I am acquainted that it sets for those young men who subscribe to it the highest and most exacting standards of living, the noblest ideals of life. I have every reason to suppose that the ideals of other similar organizations are equally high.

If fraternity men have failed at times to live up to the best for which their fraternity stands, as no doubt they have, the fault can not rightfully be laid at the door of fraternity ideals any more than the shortcomings of members of the Presbyterian church can be with justice attributed to the inadequacy of John Calvin's expression of faith. The fault may with greater reason be



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attributed to youth and thoughtlessness, and inexperience. It is the commonest experience of my every day work when I am struggling seriously to get at the reason why a young fellow has failed to respond to a call, or cribbed in an examination, or come home drunk, or taken a joy ride in somebody else's car, to get the reply, "I didn't think much about it." Fraternity principles and ideals are all right, but the initiates too often think too little about them. They are too often like the man who, when he was asked if he belonged to church, replied that he did, but that he did not usually work very hard at it.

There are a number of reasons why fraternity men do not always take as seriously as they should the ideals of the fraternity. First of all there is the condition of youth. The average young man who goes into a fraternity has had little experience either in governing himself or in directing others. He may even be a petted only child or a coddled youngest son who is having his first experience in self-direction. He will learn in time to take responsibility, but he may do so slowly. He may not take the principles of the organization seriously at first, but a very small percentage of those men who remain actively in a fraternity for four years fail to be impressed with the dignity and seriousness of the principles and ideals of the fraternity and with their own obligation to make

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these principles the basis of their own conduct and character. It is more often those who have active membership for a few months only—the probationers as it were—who fail to get the spirit of the organization, and who while they are in college and when they return at intervals to help celebrate college functions take their fraternity ideals lightly.

As I have said in another paper, the undignified details which in many chapters precede or accompany initiations do much to detract from the moral effect of the initiation service, and too often give to the initiate the impression that the ideals presented in the ritual, like the “rough stuff” that has accompanied the initiation, are all a part of a big joke none of which he is to take seriously. The whole psychological effect of an initiation is lost if the initiate does not come away from the ceremony with a distinct conception of what the fraternity ideals are and a definite feeling that he must embody these in his own daily life.

The fact that young men are bound together in an organization such as is a Greek-letter fraternity, sometimes helps to hold them to ideals and sometimes hinders; it very often depends upon who the leader happens to be. If he happens to be strong and self-reliant and high principled, the organization is a great help; if he is unscrupulous or thoughtless and impulsive, it may be a detri-

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ment. I have in mind a group of young fraternity men who were taking an examination. The time was short, the last question was difficult, and all were confused. An upperclassman near the close of the hour glancing at the paper of his neighbor read what he supposed to be a correct answer to the question. Without thinking he wrote it down and whispered the solution to his needy brothers. It was an impulsive act of a thoughtless leader who succeeded in getting five men into serious trouble. He had for the time being forgotten his fraternity ideals.

I used to think that a good many fraternity men had little real conception of what the principles and ideals of their fraternities mean. I am not so sure now that this is true. I think, perhaps, that the real trouble lies in the fact that most men accept and believe the principles in a general way as we sometimes take the lessons of a sermon, but they think of them more as desirable for the human race than as applying to their own individual daily lives. Honesty, and truth and temperance and chastity and loving one's brother are admirable virtues in an impersonal abstract way and the fraternity man like other well-trained men accepts them without question. It is when it comes to the present personal application of these virtues that he stumbles or falls down. But if fraternity ideals are to be

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really worthy the name they must be more vital than that; they must be more than intangible, general principles which one may live up to as or when he pleases.

“I know that fraternity men are extravagant, and profane and snobbish ~~and intemperate~~ and dissipated at times,” a fraternity man wrote me not long ago, “but the close brotherly relations which the fraternity fosters more than offsets these irregularities.” I do not believe it. Unless fraternity men in large measure live up to their ideals, the fraternity has little justification.

Unless I misunderstand the purposes which actuated the high minded men who established the various Greek-letter fraternities of this country and unless I misinterpret the statements of fraternity principles and ideals as I read them in fraternity publications and fraternity literature generally or listen to their presentation at fraternity conventions and gatherings, the fraternity man is under an added obligation to what other men are to be honest and temperate and clean.

There lie on my desk now two letters from local business men which say, “The accompanying bills have been due for more than a year. Do you think that it is possible for us to collect from these men?” And yet both of the men mentioned have had plenty of money to meet all their necessary bills. They have simply run unnecessary accounts for



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flowers and cabs and candy and rather than practice economy or make a clean breast of it to father they have allowed the bills to go unpaid and probably intend to do so. If I should call them they would probably fall back upon the time-worn excuse that they hadn't thought much about it. The fraternity man who does not pay his debts, who borrows and forgets to return, who cribs on an examination or who even helps a needy brother to do so, who copies his themes from a book or who hands in another man's work as his own, has an erroneous conception of his obligations and is not living up to the ideals of his fraternity. If there is any undergraduate who should be depended upon to be honest and careful about keeping his word and meeting his obligations it is a fraternity man. The fact that in some institutions proportionately more fraternity men than other men are caught in dishonest acts and in financial irregularities, is not because fraternity men are less clever or more carefully watched than other men, but because they have been careless in living up to their ideals.

All over the country the cry is going up with reference to fraternity scholarship. Fraternities get the pick of graduates of the best high schools and preparatory schools, or at least claim to do so, and yet in many of the best institutions of the country we find that fraternity scholarship is distinctly inferior to that of the rank and file of

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these institutions. Even if fraternity men have no desire, as many of them say, to be intellectual "high brows," they should at least not be contented to be rated as commonplace and as intellectual "bone heads." The fraternity which lacks scholastic ideals is pretty likely to be weak in moral stamina. If an institution is weak in scholarship it has little claim to standing in educational circles. It is rather difficult to see how a fraternity can have much claim to high standing which does not keep its scholastic average at least up to the average of the institution of which it is a part.

The fact that most fraternities have a chapter house ~~regulation which forbids drinking in the house or the bringing in of intoxicants~~ is pretty conclusive evidence that the fraternity has not found the "booze party" helpful in the advancement of the organization. I have seen a good deal of drinking during my life, both in college and out of it, but I have no recollection of ever knowing any one who was helped by it, and I have known hundreds who were injured. The college student who drinks is almost always harmed by it, not so much in a physical way, but in the development of vulgar coarse associations, in the lowering of his ideals, and sometimes in the cultivation of habits which ultimately detract from his business efficiency.

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At our last Home-coming a young fraternity man whom I had not seen for three or four years came into my office to call on me. I remarked on how well he was looking and in reply he said,

“I ought to look well, for I have not drank or smoked for three years.”

“Why the reform?” I inquired.

“The firm for which I work,” he said, and it is one of the best known manufacturers of men’s furnishings goods in the country, “would not keep me on a day if they knew I drank and I found that by cutting out both beer and tobacco I was able to do more efficient work than I had done before.”

“I expect to give it all up when I get out of college,” a young fellow said to me not long ago, “but a man has to have a little fun once in a while when he is young, and I don’t take too much very often.”

It is this sort of argument which lowers fraternity ideals and results in periodic “keg parties” and “booze fests”; it is responsible for the setting aside of house rules on occasion, and causes fraternities too often to look, with charity upon escapades which are really discreditable and harmful. When business men everywhere are beginning to see the detrimental effects of drinking upon their employees, when the whole country is being stirred to temperance reform, the fraternity



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can scarcely afford to set for itself less lofty ideals.

Intemperance in matters of society and extravagance in the spending of money are two often found among ~~fraternity~~ men. Freshmen are frequently considered eligible or otherwise in proportion to the amount of money they have at their disposal or the probability of their making a striking social impression. The fellow who can talk easily, dress well, and make good with the girls is not infrequently considered more desirable than the one who has intellectual ambitions and sterling moral principles but who is less characterized by social finesse. Here again the fraternity might with profit give a little attention to the principles and ideals underlying the organization before choosing between these two sorts of men. Whatever may be true in other institutions, however, the one in which I have worked for many years has no chapter of a fraternity which does not count among its members fellows who are under obligations to earn their own living and who come to college without social prominence. I have never been able to see that such men lost anything of respect or regard through lack of money or social prestige. If conditions in other institutions are otherwise, so much less credit to fraternity men who make them so.



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No fraternity man who reads his ritual thoughtfully will find in it any justification of the life that is not morally clean. No man who lives up to the ideals of his fraternity will find any place for irregular sexual relations or for low vulgar profane talk. It is not true that "We must expect these things" and that "Everybody does them, so why expect the fraternity man to be better than other men." The facts are that not everybody does do them, and besides the fraternity man has set for himself ideals supposedly higher than those which are held by "everybody," and he has obligations resting upon him to live a clean moral life which many other men have not assumed for themselves.

Here again in the choosing of men there is sometimes, I am afraid, too little thought given to the moral ideals of the men under consideration. The fact that a man is a "good fellow" with personal charm and attractiveness should not over balance the fact that he is a vulgar profane talker or that he has unclean habits. I have in mind now a much advertised high school graduate of low moral ideals. He was rushed by several organizations but bid by only one. The others dropped him, not because his character was bad, they said, they could have overlooked that, but because he had talked about his escapades and made them known to other people. If he had kept quiet concerning

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his dissipations and his diseases, even though they had been known, he might have been accepted by a number of other organizations.

Unless the fraternity gives men higher ideals of life it is not fulfilling the purpose which its founders had in mind. Unless its influence is such as to make men more honest in their work and in their business relations; cleaner in their lives and cleaner in their talk, more temperate in eating and more temperate in drinking, better students and better men and better citizens it is failing to do the work that it should do. If a man can be a drone or dissolute, or dishonest, or vulgar, and not lose standing in his fraternity there is something the matter with his fraternal ideals. The fight against fraternities is based upon the fact that people on the outside say that fraternity life leads men to dissipation and extravagance, makes them loafers and flunkers and snobs, and unfits them for the serious worthy work of life. The intimate relations which I have had with fraternities and fraternity men for almost half my life have not led me to such conclusions. It is true that individual instances may be found to prove all of the accusations which have been made against fraternities by those who oppose them, just as perpetrators of all sorts of crimes and violaters of law may be found in the church, but in the main I believe these accusations are false. Fraternities have grown

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too rapidly, perhaps; they were too loosely organized, they were allowed to drift away from their original principles, but they are coming back. In every organization with which I am acquainted there are high minded men who respect their obligations and not only live up to the ideals of the organization themselves but who do all in their power to help their brothers to do so. I believe that the fraternity is doing a worthy work, and that within the next few years, under proper organization and direction, it will do a much greater one. The purpose of every fraternity man should be to magnify the ideals of his fraternity, to make them something more than mere sentiment, to exemplify them more fully in his own daily life, and to impress them more forcefully upon the undergraduate members with whom he comes in contact. It is only through the vitalizing of its ideals that the fraternity will come into the respect which it deserves.







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