

# HAZING PROBLEM AT NAVAL ACADEMY AND ITS HISTORY

## Difficulty of Detection Due to Point of Honor of "Plebes" Not to Betray Their Persecutors.

**W**HAT are you doing with those red eyes?" asked a friend in Annapolis of a fourth classman. "Why I have been under the shower bath fourteen times in one day and had to go to bed in wet pajamas!"

This is supplemented by the experience of Midshipman Thomas R. Wynkoop, Jr., of Ohio, who was made to stand on his head in the Naval Academy, upper class curriculum of educating the "plebes," a course forbidden by academic regulations and act of Congress, so many times that he fell unconscious and had to be taken to the sickbay for treatment.

Now "standing on the head" in midshipman parlance is not the usual gymnastic performance of altering the posture of nature but consists in the performer getting down on all fours and kicking up both legs in the air as fast as he can. There must be no relaxation or the actor will receive a rude reminder to proceed with the exercise. On the 150th or 200th time the victim is near to or does, collapse, as did Midshipman Wynkoop.

The plebes are not allowed after a day of strenuous work in the "setting up drill," "at cars," infantry tactics or gymnasium exercises to eat in peace. They are made to sit at the table on the edge of their chairs, throw back their shoulders and be erect as ramrods and eat. If they unbend for a moment an upper classman will call to them: "Brace up!" One midshipman was required to sit up with a tumbler of water on his head and eat his meal in this awkward position. Then the "plebes" are required to tell stories at the end of which they are told by their "superior officer"—an upper classman—that that "story was rotten." If this does not furnish enough amusement for the "gentlemen at the table" the plebes are required to get under the table and finish their meal.

These incidents have all occurred in the brief life of the new fourth classman, whose practices at the end of which he is told by their "superior officer"—an upper classman—that that "story was rotten." If this does not furnish enough amusement for the "gentlemen at the table" the plebes are required to get under the table and finish their meal.

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class, forced to the wall, considered rebellion. They would have had the delighted country behind them, but the fact that they would be "put on the pap" and were in danger of not graduating deterred them. When a midshipman is placed on the morning report for a violation of regulations the word of the midshipman in an official capacity is taken against the explanation of the accused. So rigorous is the course of the Naval Academy that years and years ago an officer on duty there said, "No midshipman would ever graduate if every infringement of regulations was counted against him."

Discipline is difficult because its maintenance is assailed by the "rates," customs and usages among the midshipmen that take the place of academic rules, naval regulations and the laws of Congress. The first class lays down the rules, and all classes are expected and are required to obey the unwritten law even though it flies in the face of regulations. A "first class rate" is that a first class man must report a violation of regulations by some midshipman who was on duty falling to report the absence of the two delinquent midshipmen. He was found. Then he boldly told the academic authorities that he would not report a classmate. That is—a "rate" among the midshipmen stood higher with him than his duty to the academy.

Not so with Richmond Pearson Hobson—no "rates" kept him from the performance of his duty. It was said of him, "He would report his roommate." If it was his duty to do so, many good rules and "rates" obtain, but others that find their way into the code are ridiculous.

Following is a set of rules for plebes: "No plebe must walk in lover's lane unless he has his mother with him. Only first and second class men may sit on the benches on the main walk, first class men on the northwest bench and second class men on the northeast one. "On an upper class man entering a plebe's room the plebe must stand up and turn his face to the wall. "Plebes must not laugh at any joke told by an upper class man. "Plebes must turn corners square. "They must answer 'sir' in their replies to questions by upper class men. "Plebes on coming out of their rooms for a drink of water must put on their caps and gloves and button up their blouses before going to the cooler.

How the hazing came to the eyes and ears of the academy has not yet been made public. By act of Congress the hazing investigations now are all in star chamber courts at the Naval Academy unless the accused demands a naval court-martial for his trial. No midshipman accused of hazing has ever asked it. Publicity of this misdemeanor is, apparently, regarded by the hazer as worse than dismissal.

Two statements are current as to the way in which the present hazing was discovered. One report says that Lieut. A. M. Cohen, U. S. N., of the executive department, formerly called the "department of discipline," whose special duty is to look after the order of the Naval Academy, unearthed the "runnings" and hazing which brought into being the present board of investigation, whose powers only extend to the finding of a verdict of guilty or not. If guilty, the cases will be referred upon by the superintendent of the Naval Academy and the Secretary of the Navy. This is almost a formality, as the act of Congress provides for the dismissal of all midshipmen found guilty of hazing, and even of those present while it is in progress, though they take no part in the proceedings.

The second account gives the credit of the detection of hazing and bringing the knowledge of it to the ears of the authorities of the academy to an irate New York father, whose son was given soap and water which he washed himself, and, at the end of repeated abutions, "was ordered to drink the contents of his basin."

It transpired that an upper classman who rated the hazer prevented the order from being carried out, but the father of the plebe learned of it and informed the academy authorities.

Naturally, it is asked, "How can the upper class men do these things and the officers not know it?" The answer is—there are 500 rooms in the living house of the midshipmen, Bancroft Hall, and often only one officer of the day on duty, with a few aids. Thus it is impossible to watch every point at once in this, one of the longest buildings in the world. Then the hazers set out sentries to give warning of the step of authority. Besides all of these precautions the plebe generally would rather die under his treatment than tell on his hazer. This has been carried so far that it is now said the plebes are even sworn not to inform on their persecutors. Then the last weapon of defense of the hazer is his official authority. When a plebe resists the morning orders they put him on the morning report for any offense he commits, and he may soon face a charge of "inaptitude for the naval service" by having more than the allotted number of demerits. This is called "putting a midshipman on the pap."

Once in the history of the Naval Academy the fourth class did rebel. They massed for the fight in the upper corridor of their quarters. The officer in charge heard the noise and came up and stopped the open acts of turbulence. This present fourth

# MARJORIE STINSON, THE YOUNGEST WOMAN AEROPLANE PILOT



Marjorie Stinson.



Nearer view of the youngest girl aviator.

Above—Katherine Stinson at the wheel of her machine.



Katherine Stinson.

**T**o Miss Marjorie Stinson, known among the aeronauts as the "baby aviatrice," belongs the distinction of being the only woman to become a member of the United States Aviators Reserve. She still has another distinction. She is the youngest woman in the world to pilot an aeroplane.

Miss Stinson became a full fledged flier last August, and has been recognized as such by the Aero Club of

America, which has granted her a regular license. She has followed in the footsteps of her sister, Miss Katherine Stinson, who won her degree two years ago. The elder sister went to San Antonio, Tex., where she conducted a school of aerogautics and told the school children about aeroplanes.

The Stinson sisters are the best known women fliers in this country at present, as the pioneers have either

met with fatal accidents or given up the adventure after exciting moments and hairbreadth escapes. Miss Harriet Quimby, the first woman aviator of

written records of the Naval Academy. The old, old custom of "cussing out" has still to be endured by the present plebe class. The upper class men do this to them in a style that would make the ordinary man shudder. They are ingeniously inventive in coming up with profane expressions that border on the blasphemous, while still showing a remarkable ingenuity of expression. Moreover, plebes are required to "cuss out" others at the order of the hazer. While the midshipman will not voluntarily engage in hazing, it is a curious and suggestive fact that of twenty officers asked to give their opinion on hazing by the Congressional committee that examined these conditions in the Naval Academy in 1905 not one approved of it. Not only was it their opinion that only the mean and despicable in each class indulged in severe and brutal hazing, but an officer now connected with the staff of the academy and once a midshipman said that even should a hazer be graduated bad luck and dishonor generally follows him in the service.

A large part of the hazing is said by some to be due to the pusillanimity of the plebes. "Why didn't you assert your manhood?" asked Rear Admiral Mahan once when he was on a board of investigation when a plebe had told him of the indignities that he suffered. The fourth class men, however, enter the academy expecting to take the insults and to have their self-respect lowered with the idea that it is justified by custom.

For a brief time hazing ceased after the Congressional investigation of 1905. The senior class promised not to haze. The next class would not promise, much to the disgust of the Naval Academy. They referred to the action of the class in their report and said that that class needed to be watched.

anything but a pleasure, and consequently such an inquiry was a great offense and would certainly be punished when the upper class men returned to the Naval Academy. To debate the question, "Which make the best husbands, married or single men?" To spell their names after the orthography and manner of the midshipman. For instance, standing upright before his interrogator, the plebe would reply in this manner: "Sir-M-sir-e-sir-n-sir-s-sir-r-sir-Menzor-sir."

To climb on top of his wardrobe and make a dive from it to his bed. To get up several times in the night and take a shower bath. To dance, sing and make speeches. To act as an orderly and k.t. under a bench in the academy grounds. To report at sunrise, 9:30 P. M., at an upper class men's room and to stand on his head, after the Naval Academy fashion. To bend over a chair and be spanked

about to go before a court of investigation as a witness was hazed by an upper class man until he fell unconscious. He was revived by water and hazed anew until he again lost consciousness. His condition being discovered by an officer, the injured youth was sent to the hospital, where the surgeon found a state that his life was in danger. Nothing could induce the plebe to tell what was the matter with him. There was other testimony, however, and the hazer was "dismissed" from the academy.

The present board of investigation into hazing at the Naval Academy consists of Commander John Fore Hines, U. S. N., senior member; Commander Joel R. P. Pringle, U. S. N., and Commander James J. Raby, U. S. N., members, and Lieut. A. M. Cohen, U. S. N., recorder.

Seventeen midshipmen are charged with the offence of hazing. The duties of the board are not easy. Beside judging otherwise good and capable midshipmen, they are called upon to pass judgment in some cases that may ruin the naval career of the sons of their own friends.

No findings and no recommendations from the acting superintendent of the Naval Academy, Capt. Lloyd H. Chandler, U. S. N., have yet been made public. The character of hazing varies according to the mind of the hazer. It has been said by graduates of the Naval Academy over and over again that the meanest hazers in their several classes were the pygmies, physically and mentally, of their organizations—midshipmen who never graduated. Knowing their bodily defects they took advantage of the sentiment that made the class membership support each other and gave anxious orders to see them executed by men superior in form and talent. There is, however, a proviso in the code that allows a plebe, when he thinks that an improper order has been given him, to appeal to the president of the upper class men to have judgment rendered whether or not the order was a legal one and should be obeyed. This regulation is seldom invoked. The plebe generally obeys or fights. Sometimes he does the latter, and more than once he has come off more than victor. Midshipman De Lany in the old academy days, resisted. He had several combats and showed such pluck that the upper class men stopped hazing him, much to the disgust of his fellow classmen, who were jealous and indignant at his exemption.

A few years ago a plebe was hazed during the summer out in the open until he fell unconscious. He was smuggled into Bancroft Hall without the knowledge of the officers. The next morning at breakfast an upper class man, as the plebe took the salt cellar, said, with an insulting meaning, "I would like to have some of that."

The worm turned. He tried to the upper class man, "I am tired of this. I do not need to stay in this academy. I gave up a \$35 a week job to come here. I can lick you and your whole class."

He began it. Flight after flight occurred. His roommate, frightened at his boldness, changed rooms, but the aroused plebe fought on until his tormentors called off the fourths. At the most noted of all the brave acts of resisting plebes happened soon after the civil war. A six footer from Tennessee was ordered to ring the bell on the old United States ship Santee, moored at the academy wharf, off the main entrance. The fourth class was then quartered on the Santee. At gun fire, 9:30 P. M., and release from rooms, twenty-six midshipmen of the third class appeared on shipboard and one laid hands on the Tennesseean's hand. He jumped out of bed, with a bowie knife in one hand and a revolver in the other, and chased twenty-six third class men up and off the wharf. This incident is among the

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## BUBBLES Drawn by Rene Bull



With apologies to a well known brand of soap.

man might hazing. Her son told her so the report goes, which was wrong, and she went straight to the officers and uncovered the intended raid of the plebes. That night there was a hazing, for every upper class man in the corridors of Bancroft Hall was to give an account of himself. The plebes who were most diligent with their classmates who had given his mother information of the intended foray upon them.

Capt. John H. Gibbons, U. S. N., was superintendent of the Naval Academy from May 15, 1911, to February 1914, made a vigorous effort to suppress hazing. He told the fourth class men that he would punish any midshipman who even submitted to hazing. No plebes were made public examples. The hazed midshipman always thinks it a point of honor to protect the hazer. It is only when a hazing is under oath that the truth comes out.

No foreign student at the academy is ever hazed. There used to be Japanese midshipmen there. A passenger working hard to catch up to the passing mark is seldom met with a hazing. The plebes who have made the football team's exempt.

## ON THE BRINK

**D**o you see that man standing irresolutely by the water's edge?" asked the man who has theories for all occasions. "And what is he waiting for?"

The two acquaintances with whom he was watching the bathers, and with whom he had been spending a week at the seaside, saw no sign of avoiding the admission that the figure in question was within their sphere of vision.

"Well," proceeded the man who was about to enunciate another theory, it is quite evident that he hesitates to enter the cold water because he is difficult in screwing his feet into the point of making the plunge. Now some people make people in fact, would be inclined to deride his timidity, but to me it is an assured evidence of unusual intelligence. He is in all probability a demerit than the bathers you see already in the water.

"His fear of the shock that a little cold shows him to be of a sensitive and receptive and impressionable nature, and it is these qualities that make him a most valuable member of the staff at the present moment if it is true that he do not place him in the most favorable light. Those who dwell without hesitation into the by ways may be better animals, but more plebeian hardihood is of small value in this sort of game."

"Therefore," he continued, "I firmly believe that in the bathers we see before us we have an unusual opportunity to pick out the one who is superior by the manner in which he looks at the water. It is only a matter of time before Mr. Brown will be asked to give the man at his right what you think of my theory."

"If you insist on a frank opinion," was Brown's slow and thoughtful reply, "I think it is plain that the man in question is a most valuable member of the staff at the present moment if it is true that he do not place him in the most favorable light. Those who dwell without hesitation into the by ways may be better animals, but more plebeian hardihood is of small value in this sort of game."

"Turning," still hopeful, the man at his left, the passenger who had been asked, "And what is your theory, Mr. Smith?"

"Considering the fact that you changed your mind upon entering the water on the way to the bathhouse, and that you were given a week's association with a man who has made the football team's exempt, I am inspired to remark that your respectful is the characteristic of justification."