

The Phi and Psi and CON of College Societies

Their Influences as Seen by

DR. WILSON'S INDICTMENT OF PRINCETON CLUBS

"They divide all four classes into segments and sharply separate the classes as wholes from one another during the two earlier years of the undergraduate's course, when characters are being formed and points of view established."

"The club absorbs all the planning faculties of the undergraduates, because all social ambitions turn upon it. It will be difficult to exaggerate the importance in the life of the undergraduate as to whether at the end of his sophomore year he is going to be taken into one of the upper class clubs."

"The university . . . seems in danger of becoming, if the present tendencies of undergraduate organizations are allowed to work out their logical results, only an artistic setting and background for life on Prospect avenue."

Undergraduate clubs must go, declare the trustees of Princeton university, led and inspired by the energetic president, Woodrow Wilson. To the upper class organizations, that have grown up in the last 50 years and now wield a powerful influence in the university's affairs, the trustees say in effect through a report adopted at the last commencement:

You have inspired factionalism. You have encouraged luxury. You have discouraged democracy. You have discouraged aristocracy. You have absorbed student energies.

Therefore you must be abolished or absorbed into the university life, forming residential "quads," wherein members of all classes with preceptors shall live together.

And the clubs reply, not officially, for this pronouncement went forth too late for the present year, but through the published offers and private conversation of members:

We satisfy the natural longing of young men for associations based on congeniality.

We link the alumni more closely to the university by providing homes to which they may turn with ever increasing zest.

We are the product of devoted labor and great expenditure of time and money.

We cannot be abolished or absorbed. In the controversy certain to result from this unusual situation in Princeton, the average college man will have more than an average interest. Princeton men must settle the Princeton problem in their own way. But because these clubs represent in a way the Greek letter fraternities which Princeton does not permit to live within her gates Dr. Wilson's crusade has a distinct claim to public attention. It brings to the footlights anew the long question:

What is the value of college societies?

Club and Fraternity Undergraduate society life in American colleges divides naturally into two types. In one the club idea is dominant; in the other the fraternity or brotherhood idea is uppermost. Definite restrictions on one or two classes is common in the club type. The fraternity type takes men from all classes and all courses, forming what might be styled a family group.

To find illustrations of the club type one must seek Harvard, Yale or Princeton. In this eastern trio of universities, redolent with history and traditions, the intercollegiate society takes the lower place. But it speaks vigorously for the greater of the two ideas that not a single other institution in the land has followed the example of these three in localizing their social interests. Columbia, Cornell, Syracuse, Pennsylvania have their dozens of chapters of the Greek letter societies. Every one of the so-called historical colleges of the east has its quota from three or four up. In the democratic west and especially in the many mid-west universities these societies have had a very sturdy growth. The institutions of the south are filled with chapters.

The reason for the differentiation of societies in Harvard, Yale and Princeton from the fraternal type lies in local conditions. In the two New England institutions college sentiment has overpowered what might be called the intercollegiate spirit. Both are self-sufficient, to use the word in its original sense. They have felt less the need of outside ties than institutions of less age. Princeton received her direction along this line last century through a faculty decree dating back half a century.

Harvard has been from the beginning a graveyard for Greek letter societies. Almost every prominent fraternity has attempted to support a chapter there, and most of them have failed. Sometimes the charters have been withdrawn because the Harvard organization had become a misrepresentation of the parent society. This was notably true 15 years ago of the so-called "Delcey." Established as a chapter of Delta Kappa Epsilon, it came to be a sophomore society, which required its candidates to do sensational and even dangerous "stunts." Finally the fraternity withdrew its sanction and the society now exists only as a "local."

In much the same way the Alpha Delta Phi chapter at Harvard has changed its position, though still retaining connection with the fraternity. To most Harvard men it is only known as the "A. D. club," and is largely an upper class society, initiating men of social position and wealth. Many of its members come up through a sort of social chain. This begins with the unique Institute of 1773, which selects perhaps 150 freshmen by lot, and it continues through the sophomore "Delcey."

Combining social prestige with attention to the drama are the Hasty Pudding, full of years, and the Phi Eta. Both these societies give plays in the spring, usually original productions of the members.

One hears more about Greek letter societies at Yale than at Harvard. They have adjusted themselves more closely, perhaps, to the Yale system, which, in the academic department, at least, has no counterpart in any other American college.

The influence of the senior societies, Skull and Bones, Scroll and Key and Wolf's Head, to which has recently been added a would-be rival, the Eli club, is overshadowing. Owing to the pressure of these societies, the leading Greek letter societies are virtually junior organizations, though taking in

a few freshmen and some sophomores for prudential reasons. Alpha Delta Phi, Delta Kappa Epsilon, Psi Upsilon and Zeta Psi have been on this basis for years. Beta Theta Phi also recently decided to abandon its long struggle to run a chapter of the ordinary character. Phi Gamma Delta and Phi Sigma Kappa are the only societies now attempting it.

If academic Yale is abnormal in its solution of the society question, the Sheffield scientific school is not. There four year societies are the rule. Two of the national fraternities have long maintained chapters there side by side with prosperous locals.

Every important society in Yale owns a house, many of these being of a very ornate character. Those that shelter the senior societies are conspicuous for their unbroken walls and general mystifying appearance.

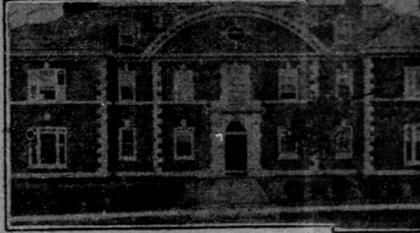
Princeton's experience with undergraduate societies is for the moment, at least, a much more interesting study than that of Harvard or Yale. As is well known, Princeton forbids the organization of chapters or fraternities in the university. This was not always so. Twelve national fraternities have had chapters there, and 16 were



TIGER INN CLUB.



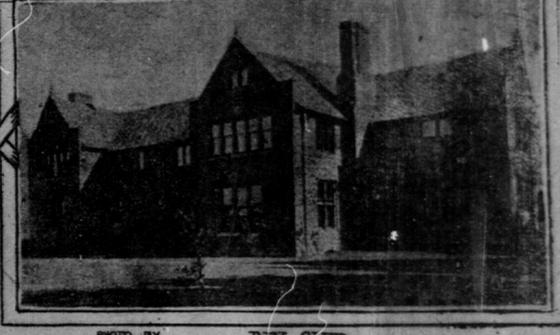
CHARTER CLUB, PHOTO BY PRINCETON.



CAMPUS CLUB, PHOTO BY G. C. WELLS.



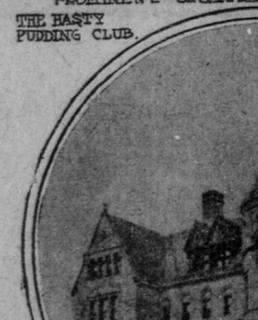
CAP AND GOWN CLUB, PRINCETON.



IVY CLUB, PRINCETON.



HARVARD HOME OF PROMINENT ORGANIZATION.



THE HASTY PUDDING CLUB.



SCROLL AND KEY, A TYPICAL LARGE SENIOR SOCIETY LODGE.

in existence there in 1885, when the college authorities finally voted to exclude them. This action was taken to save from destruction the ancient Cluaphic and American Whig societies, commonly called Clu and Whig. These organizations for literary and parliamentary training were founded in 1765 and 1769 respectively. They had existed in healthy rivalry nearly a century before the Greek letter societies came. Then their glory began to wane and Princeton's leaders acted vigorously to oust the newcomers.

Princeton has no memorial hall, no "commons," hence the gathering of students in small coteries at meals outside has long been a popular idea. The membership of these clubs regulated itself. Men of the same likes gravitated together, even the quality of "grub" furnished being of less importance than the social affinity of the "crowd."

Members took the clubs not at all seriously. They gave them the most fantastic names they could devise, and often both name and club died with the year. Thus it came about that while the Ivy, the first eating club organized on the present basis, was founded in 1878, it was still in 1934 the only club having a permanent character.

A year later the Cottage club came into being. Tiger Inn came the following year. Then it was evident that the university was on the eve of a social revolution. Everybody had suddenly discovered how nice it would be to have a permanent home for his dining club.

So into the university came organized 10 more eating clubs, well organized and many of them incorporated to insure long life. In order of founding these were Cap and Gown, Colonial, Elm, Cannon, Campus, Quadrangle, Charter, Tower, Terrace and Key and Seal.

These, with the older Ivy, Cottage and Tiger Inn, constitute the 13 clubs against which the Princeton trustees are moving. Each has its own house, its seal and charter, its board of alumni governors, its honorary members from the faculty and its pretty pin.

The active membership of each club is about 80, nearly equally divided between seniors and juniors. The club-houses range in size from buildings worth perhaps \$15,000 to elaborate structures of older clubs, rivaling in equipment and luxury the homes of country clubs. One house cost \$100,000, and another is not far behind. The value of property held by the 13 clubs is conservatively estimated today at \$500,000. Five of the clubs that now have fairly good houses are already planning to erect finer ones.

Dr. Wilson says these clubs, with their manifold delights, must be abolished or transformed. In his report to the trustees, which the board approved with virtual unanimity, he declared that the success of the preceptorial system in Princeton was in danger from the growing demands of club life. He called deplorable the condition of upper classmen who were not chosen to these clubs. "They go forward," he said, "to their graduation almost like men who are in the university and yet not of it."

He described how sophomore clubs have been organized in the university with almost the sole purpose of getting their members into the upper class clubs. Freshmen also have their organization designated to make easy a transition into the sophomore clubs and then higher up.

As a cure for this state of affairs the committee proposed "the grouping of the undergraduates in residential quadrangles, each with its common dining room, its common room for intercourse and diversion and its resident master and preceptors, where members of all

classes shall be associated in a sort of family life, as comraded at meals and in many daily activities, the upper classes ruling and forming the lower and all in constant association with members of the faculty."

The Princeton clubs are hardly to be classed as even near fraternities. In their selective principle and in their linking of alumni and undergraduates they resemble Greek letter societies, but they are weaker where fraternities are strongest—in the joining of class delegations by a common bond. And it is deeply significant that President Wilson's proposed reform would establish in Princeton subdivisions of the students or almost the exact lines of fraternity chapters, but omitting the selective principle and adding representatives of the faculty as guides and mentors of the undergraduates.

Secretary Root's Story It was in keen recognition of this point that Secretary Root, a member of Sigma Phi, speaking at the Hamilton commencement dinner, where he praised the influence of fraternities, told this pithy incident:

"I have been very much interested in the announcement that Princeton is preparing to do away with the great dining clubs. I asked the president of Princeton at Harvard yesterday whether it was true and he said that he had become satisfied that it was necessary for the greatest usefulness of the institution that instead of a separate system of clubs from classes there should be a restoration of clubs that should include in different groups the members of all classes. I said, 'That is what your school expelled me for 50 years ago!'"

The head of the state department is not alone among public men in the recent expression of affection for the college organization to which he belonged and the fraternity system in general. At a complimentary banquet tendered to him last March by the Delta Upsilon club of New York Governor Hughes eloquently portrayed the benefits of fraternity life.

"To these individual instances which might be multiplied a hundredfold, could be added the views of college presidents who believe in fraternity life. Only a few years ago the heads of 48 colleges in the country were sounded by a fraternity man. Of the responses only one was uncompromisingly opposed to the Greek letter system. Thirty-four replies were distinctly favorable.

That there are certain evils in the fraternity life, however, no one will question. Chancellor Day of Syracuse university is one of those who think they exceed the good. In a letter to the writer he says:

"If fraternities were not in Syracuse

I would not welcome them. That there are some good things about them to be commended I do not question. They can be made in some of their features helpful to character and scholarship, and some of the chapters are so. But they may be mischievous and harmful, and there are in all large universities chapters that are losing places, absorbing time that should be devoted to study and giving trivial conversation and social festivities the place that belongs to solid thinking and earnest discussion of student purposes and plans.

"The rivalry of chapters is not a sacrifice to the university. Every thing must serve the chapter. It is not possible to secure a spirit of democracy in a university where fraternities and similar clubs are dominant. And there is no place where democracy is so desired as in college. We want no rich or poor, high or low in college. We want equal terms of manhood and womanhood and equality of student privileges. Our aristocracy should be the aristocracy of character and scholarship with equal advantages and amenities to all.

"There should be decided changes in college fraternities and clubs or they should go. The only ground upon which they have any claim to stay is the service they render the institution."

To the discussion of fraternity betterment Clarence F. Birdseye, a New York lawyer and member of Chi Psi, has recently made an interesting contribution. In a book on "Individual Training in Our Colleges" he develops the idea that fraternities should take the place in the lives of their members that the college authorities used to have before the institutions became so large. Discussing this large proposition he says:

"There has been no systematic study of the fraternity as an educational influence until about three years ago. Then one fraternity put a paid secretary into the field to look out for its 18 college homes and bring its alumni into close and living touch with its undergraduate members and thus provide a force that would improve and inspire the college lives of its undergraduate members.

"Its results have been very marked in the very place sought to be reached, i. e., in the 30 per cent of the student's life spent outside the classroom, with a corresponding beneficial effect on the 10 per cent spent in the classroom. This fraternity is seeking the co-operation of the sister fraternities. What has found no place in general makes it imperative to move all other fraternities to do the same for their own members.

"Already, as the result of this experiment, four other fraternities are agitating the appointment of a general secretary. Furthermore, the officers of at least four large universities, with an aggregate attendance of 13,000, have recognized the power of good of the fraternities and are proposing to improve student conditions by organizing the alumni of the various fraternities for systematic work in the college homes of the undergraduates."

William Rainham Baird, a member of Beta Phieta Pi and a recognized authority on fraternity matters from his editing of American College Fraternities, is less optimistic as to the educational development of Greek letter societies. He writes in response to a question:

"It will probably be impossible essentially to modify the fraternity system as it now exists within the term of one or two generations. It is my opinion that slowly this condition of things will finally be arrived at: fraternities will multiply until at each college where the system is permitted to exist there will be a sufficient number of chapters to afford membership to all the students who from whatever standpoint are eligible to membership.

"The chapter house system is not developing in the direction of efficiency as many competent observers hoped that it would ten years ago. Probably after these houses are paid for alumni enthusiasm will take the form of endowing them as that permanent income will be afforded for their support. When this time arrives the next natural step will be of providing salaried tutors and librarians whose business it will be to superintend the course of study of the chapter, perhaps, and to afford the members advice and assistance in their college work."

It seems a little singular that these fraternity workers should so closely approximate in their ideas the proposals of President Wilson. Possibly it may not be too rash a suggestion that the New Jersey university may yet find in an enlarged and invigorated fraternity system a cure for its club ills.

Legendary Superstitions of the Moon

By Mary C. Ringwalt

FROM our giddy days we accept the sun as a jolly matter of course, a too dazzling fact for our blinking eyes to take liberties with; but from the night when with outstretched baby arms we first cry for the moon that lesser luminary excites our curiosity and makes persistent demands upon our imagination.

Small wonder, then, during the childhood years of the race, when the world looked out upon life from nursery windows, that all sorts of legends and superstitions gathered about the bright mystery of the night. Traditions were handed down and added to from generation to generation until now the moon has a veritable folk lore of its own.

There is a diversity of opinion in the household concerning that interesting individual whom we all agree lives in the moon. You claim that he is the wicked old man of biblical story, who, having gathered sticks on the Sabbath, was instantly stoned to death—a proper squint and you see his bent form and the bundle of sticks that he rests on the top of his staff.

"Sticks!" scornfully retorts a friend looking over your shoulder. "They are briers and thorns symbolic of sorrow and suffering and the man with the pilgrim staff is only old in sin; Cain, murderer and fugitive, and the dog by his side the foul fend himself!"

But Ah Sing, your Chinese cook, who has overheard the foolish gibberish of the controversy, smiles his bland smile of contempt. He knows so well that the man in the moon is a woman, the beautiful slave girl Chang-ngo, to whom the maidens of China make special offerings of fruit and flowers during the moon festival every September.

For once upon a time in the long ago an angel presented an emperor of the celestial kingdom with an elixir of life, conveniently condensed in a pellet. But the potentate, careless of immortality, left the pellet—and, incidentally, the slave girl Chang-ngo—in his room while he went out a brief moment. The wide-awake maiden took advantage of her rare opportunity and quickly swallowed the pellet. Upon the discovery of the trick that she had played him, the furious emperor vowed death and destruction upon the pretty culprit. But meanwhile the pellet had begun to work, and before the fiesing Chang-ngo could be captured she was safely whisked up into the moon, where she has lived happily ever since with the pet white rabbit that she had snatched in her arms in her flight from the palace.

The Mandingo tribe in Africa look upon each new moon as newly created, whispering a prayer at the first glimpse of the silvery crescent, their reverent hands held up to shadow their faces, while another primitive tribe welcomes it with hand clapping and beating of drums.

As a curious coincidence we read of the Irish kneeling down at the discovery of the new moon, reciting the Lord's prayer, an adding in a loud voice: "May thou leave us as safe as thou hast found us."

An eclipse of the moon has always caused widespread horror—a savage animal, a witch, a demon, presumably, is in the midst of swallowing it—hence the din to frighten away the monster or evil spirit. Besides the energetic beating of kettles during an eclipse, the ancient Romans carried torches and threw firebrands into the air to raze the moon's brightness.

In the days of Caesar, unless hard pressed, the Germans would not engage in battle before the full moon, knowing that if they did so they would be defeated.

The Druids believed that the future grew big and golden with promise as the moon became full, and at the full moon in March crores were made out of newly cut mistletoe and ivy, to be kept by the people during the entire year as magic cure-alls, while just as the moon changed, month by month, feeble and afflicted folk were brought great distances to baths in a certain spring.

"I saw the new moon late yestreen, 'Til the full moon in her arm; And if we gang to sea, master, I fear we'll come to harm!"

Warns the old ballad of Sir Patrick Spens. And another weatherwise authority sagaciously informs us: "When the moon appears in the springtime the one borne spotted and hidden within a black and great cloud from the first day of his apparition to the fourth day after, it is some signe of tempests and troubles in the aire the summer after."

When the moon is at its full is the golden time for matrimony; but the engaged maiden pins her hopes upon the new moon, for if on the first night of its appearing she sits on the gate of stile and says:

"All hail to the moon, all hail to thee, I prithee, good moon, declare to me This night who my husband shall be!"

She will either immediately see an apparition of her lover to be or else meet him in his "dreams a little later on."

The wren, maid, however, has no monopoly of interest in the new moon. Every mortal discreetly courts its favor 12 times a year, knowing that "to see a new moon the first time on the right hand or directly before you betoken the utmost good fortune that month; so that in turning your head back you happen to see her, foreshows the worst; as also they say to be without gold in your pocket at that time is of very bad consequence."

But the moon is no respecter of sex. If a man has his hair cut when the moon is in Leo his locks will be shaggy like a lion's mane; while in Aries they will curl as delightfully as a ram's horn.

Passing from head to feet, he will speedily discover: "That when the moon's in her in-bow in Leo, she means a little later on, if corn be cut they'll grow apert; But if you always do take care, After the full your corn to pass, They do insensibly decay."

William Rainham Baird, a member of Beta Phieta Pi and a recognized authority on fraternity matters from his editing of American College Fraternities, is less optimistic as to the educational development of Greek letter societies. He writes in response to a question:

"It will probably be impossible essentially to modify the fraternity system as it now exists within the term of one or two generations. It is my opinion that slowly this condition of things will finally be arrived at: fraternities will multiply until at each college where the system is permitted to exist there will be a sufficient number of chapters to afford membership to all the students who from whatever standpoint are eligible to membership.

"The chapter house system is not developing in the direction of efficiency as many competent observers hoped that it would ten years ago. Probably after these houses are paid for alumni enthusiasm will take the form of endowing them as that permanent income will be afforded for their support. When this time arrives the next natural step will be of providing salaried tutors and librarians whose business it will be to superintend the course of study of the chapter, perhaps, and to afford the members advice and assistance in their college work."

It seems a little singular that these fraternity workers should so closely approximate in their ideas the proposals of President Wilson. Possibly it may not be too rash a suggestion that the New Jersey university may yet find in an enlarged and invigorated fraternity system a cure for its club ills.