

# Notes On Higher Culture At Indiana University

## *Youth and the Age*

### A Familiar Fable in Two Parts.

#### I

ONCE upon a time, not very long ago, in a town, not very far from here, the Youngest of the Younger Generation was born. Immediately he opened his eyes and shouted. "You, the Older Generation, are the cause of this. Here I have come, eager, hopeful, progressive, into your deadening environment. But I will not succumb to your fetish! By my Ego, I will not succumb!"

When the Youngest of the Younger Generation was six years old, he called his parents to him for a heart-felt talk. By careful analysis he had come to understand them and was ready to solve their difficulties in a paragraph.

"Genitors," he admonished them, "you are slaves of ritual. Smug and complacent, you refuse to see the truth. You are the enemies of progress. But we will not succumb."

As the years passed the light of his intellect burned more fiercely. At fourteen he lost his respect for his home town, cursed its provincialism, and chafed to be free. At eighteen he saw through education.

"It is a standardized process for the creation of Babbitts. It is transferring misinformation from narrow brains to shallow brains. It is the avowed enemy of truth." Realizing the uselessness of it, he began to dodge it.

Then came morality. He saw that our present mores were but hasty devices born of past necessity. Nothing was final. All was dreadfully inadequate. So he stepped over morality. In less than a year he discovered that our whole social and economic system was absolutely ridiculous.

There was nothing more for him to solve. His mighty brain had no problems on which to exercise. Consequently, after one



long year of disuse, just as he became twenty-one, just when he might have solved the riddle of the universe—if the universe had had any riddle—his brain withered and in a few months completely atrophied.

## II

At the same time, in the same town, the Dumbest of the Younger Generation was born. He opened his eyes, blinked, and went back to sleep. At the age of six he woke up for a moment. "—————," he said, and went to sleep again.

At eighteen he was sent to college.

"Why do you wish an education?" the president asked.

"—————," he answered.

"That is good," said the president. "Our faculty is perfectly able to give you that."

Three years later at the end of his freshman year, he looked back over his education. His chest swelled as he thought, "—————."

When he became twenty-one, it was discovered that the first shaft of light that entered his baby eyes had withered his brain completely.

### *The Thundering Herd*

THESE are the college students. They are always together. They live together. Together they go to class; together they come back, go to the Nook, go back for lunch, and back to class again together. Together they return to dinner, then they go to the movie together, or study together. Down the street they go together. You never see them alone. They do not have a few minutes alone. They have a fear of aloneness. If ever they work, they prefer to collaborate. They avoid being by themselves. They think together. Mass action. Herding. Is it a wonder they lose their judgment and easily and blindly follow the most fatuous ideals? They all believe that loyalty to the University means attending games, attending pep sessions, yelling, cracking the voice. They don't read, even though they did before they came here. They leave the earth together and go wild over football, organizations, dates. If one group builds a house for a hundred thousand dollars, it is unthinkable for the others to consider building one for less. Thinking together, they think it is fine to build these luxurious mansions, even though the parents back home, who are paying for these houses under the belief they are paying for Johnnie's education, live in much less comfort. They decorate themselves with clap-trap campus honors



and strut about pompously, taking all this flapdoodle with utmost gravity, believing they have the world by the tail. They insist that the University officials spend the Memorial money building stadiums and campus hotels and billiard rooms. They prefer great buildings to great men. They let Miller, Guild, many others, go without a struggle, but they fight frantically to get the Syracuse football game played in the Stadium.

These are the students who are said to be the coming leaders of the world. They are now in training to stand alone.

E. B.

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### *Dramatic Note*

Last year, Studio-Player dramatics flourished on the campus amazingly. The enthusiasm was so high that it gave rise to faint hopes that perhaps at last Shaw and Ibsen, Pirandello and Molnar, would take the stage here in the wilderness and acquaint Indiana University with the drama. Great things were in the air. This year. . . Quiet. Sapless.

We are sorry to hear that Mr. Adkins is no longer connected with the Studio Players.

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### *Viva Babbitttry!*

**F**OR a long time we have realized that steps must be taken for the completer Babbittization of Indiana University. A spirit of ornamental and impractical learning is still to be found in a few sheltered crannies of our large and great institution, and this should be extirpated. We need none but "practical idealists" here, to use a favorite Kiwanian expression, that is, idealists whose visions can be reduced wholly to terms of dollars and numerical increase. True enough, we have a number of agencies working for a Bigger and Noisier Indiana. The Boosters Club, when as rarely happens the attention of its members is not devoted wholly to getting themselves re-elected, is the Babbitt organization par excellence. The Sphinx Club is for the embryo Babbitt at play. Other agents for the spreading of the Babbitt gospel are the Publicity Department, the Indiana Daily Student, and the Weekly Alumnus. And the fraternities, of course, are Babbitt-incubators. And so it is with great rejoicing we hear that the Babbitt organization par excellence, the Rotary Club, is to be represented on the campus. The following extract is from the most Babbittical Daily Student:



An invitation to link an Indiana University organization with a national organization of university and college organizations, to be known as the Blue Key Society, was received by Bruce Sillery, '25, president of the Boosters Club, this week from the secretary of the Blue Key organization of Florida University. The society originated at that school with the idea of connecting all college organizations similar to the local Boosters Club throughout the United States, the letter stated.

The general purpose of the national organization is to form a "College Man's Rotary Club," which will be expected to hold regular semi-monthly luncheons, similar to meetings now held, for the discussion of campus problems, the letter said.

All together now, let us sing that inspiring anthem: "The Great Big Rotary Smile."

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### *Limitation of Enrollment*

Speaking of the Sphinx Club, Wolfgang Beethoven Bunkhaus has devised a more practicable scheme for limiting the enrollment by getting rid of undesirables than has hitherto been proposed: as soon as a man is proposed for membership in the Sphinx Club, put him on probation; and as soon as he is elected, expel him.

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### *Decadence of Journalism*

Inasmuch as two recent campus articles have set forth such wisdom and are so thoroughly identified with the progressive thought of educational centers that they deserve many reprintings, we hereby offer the editorials, "Campus Activities Again," and "On the Wings of Mercury," published by the Indiana Daily Student, the World's Greatest College Daily. These are but two of the many high spots attained in human thinking and writing by the campus literary lights of this great newspaper.

#### ON THE WINGS OF MERCURY.

##### I

The fast living that is so characteristic of the American people at present has been deplored by psychologists, toy scientists and by divers other people who declare that it all is ruinous. They assert no good can come from it, that it leads to a breakdown in physical existence, that moral codes are shattered and the nation as a whole will suffer. They hearken back to the so-called "good old days," when things were serene and placid.



But it is this speed that has made America one of the leading nations of the world. America, the youngest of the really great nations, without the heritage of centuries of trials and worries under the regime of selfish rulers, has eclipsed other countries in many of the great fields of endeavor. In business, in science, in education it has excelled. Where is there a country that has so many educated people? Where is business on such a highly developed plane? Where has science progressed so remarkably?

This speed not only is characterized in the serious activities of American life. It is a salient part of athletics in high schools and colleges. It is noted on the gridiron, on the track, on the basketball floor. And on the motor speedway and the race track the by-word is speed.

This speed has made America.

Let there continue to be more speed.

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## II

### CAMPUS ACTIVITIES AGAIN.

Discussion once again is brought up on the never dying collegiate issue of whether the student should devote himself to campus activities or concentrate on his studies. This time it is a woman who taught at Indiana University several years ago. She has fallen in line with those who believe activities are a detriment to education.

The controversy probably will still be raging when the tariff question has been settled to the satisfaction of every one. College editors will write yards of copy on the subject and attempt to place their names in corridors of journalistic fame by obtaining some new slant which will lead to its settlement.

The latest expression of opinion, however, is of interest to Indiana since the former instructor evidently has drawn her conclusions from observations at this institution. She declares that colleges are over-organized, that students spend so much time rushing from committee meeting to committee meeting that they have little time for thoughtful study and reading which bring the cultural advantages of college life.

It is futile to adopt any standard for campus activities in the hope that the students will receive the maximum amount of benefit from their college careers. Is a student neglecting his "cultural opportunities" by such participation? That depends on the student. There are some men and women who probably would receive more benefit from college by staying with the books." But there are others who, if they did not participate in activities would leave the institution with nothing to show in the way of culture. They are fundamentally activity beings and to confine themselves to the curriculum would be to drift through college and make their exit very little the wiser.



If a student has no taste for reading good literature or other material on serious subjects, he would not devote himself to it, no matter how many spare hours he had. He would do himself more good by using his talents for contact with other individuals and "getting things done."

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## *A Comedy of Errors*

### Act One

#### Scene One

**A** BIG, paintless, sprawling barn stands on the campus. It is wretched looking, weather-worn. Inside, folding chairs that gripe and groan. On the stage, musty drapes, old scenery peeling, decaying. That is where the people of the University hear their speakers and experiment with the art of the drama.

#### Scene Two

Behind the Gymnasium there is a concrete structure of amazing dimensions, nicely proportioned, beautifully done. Tier upon tier of countless seats. Special stand, protected by glass windshields, reserved for newspaper men. Towers. Costs two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. That is where they see their football games.

### Act Two

#### Scene One

Homes of men who have contributed to the labors of the world. Little homes, wooden, modest, comfortable. That is where the professors live.

#### Scene Two

Palatial residences of people who have done nothing, of many who never will. They are stone mansions, expensive, regal, with spacious rooms, slick and shiny floors that are excellent for dancing, careful woodwork, tables and chairs of lovely oak. \$100,000. That is where the students live—before going back to the little grocery store on the crossroads where parents haggle for a living.

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