

Letters of the Four Years

Emma Wootton

Eugene, Oregon.
December 5, 1913.

Dear Hank:

Say bo, when I got to this college I thought that there was the classiest bunch of girls here outside of Athena. They were always rushing around all dressed up with their hair all combed fine, and smiling all over their faces. But don't you be fooled like I was. That just lasts for a week. They try to show all the new girls just what they aren't. After they rope them in and tie them it's different. They wear any old thing and skin their hair tight back and only talk to the girls in their own bunch.

I joined one too. It's not the one I liked best or the one I would have picked out but, now that I've got it, I've decided to keep it. They call them fraternities, you know. In spite of the name they are as good as any old lodge I know of.

A bunch of fellows got me after I had paid my registration money. When they stuck a button on my lapel I said "Thank you" and started to walk away, thinking it was a tag that said that I had paid. But they got hold of me and dragged me down to their house and told me that I could live there and help eat up the food. Later they slipped it to me that I could help pay the rent, sweep floors, chop and put in wood, get the mail, tend furnace, and do whatever no one else wanted to, and eat as little as possible.

A fraternity house is a place with a Greek name, but you've got to have an Irish appetite to live there. The smaller appetite you've got, the more there is for your neighbor. Their motto is, "Don't look before you leap, but shovel it in, for you might change your mind if you look to close. We believe in eat drink and be merry for tomorrow the cook might leave." There isn't a worse one on the face of the globe, but we are trying to see how long our stomachs will keep in their healthy leathern state.

There are other fraternities here besides the one we eat at. At first I got them mixed up with ours, their Greek names got my goat. I told the boys if they would tell me what they meant I'd remember them better.

There are two recreations for a Frosh here—warming cold water and holding on a green cap. The first is more difficult, and requires so many bubbles and a hot-hand, while the latter takes a stiff backbone for the hat to sit on and a strained expression. Both involve a more or less damp feeling. The first because you are forced to surround a lot of cold water, either in the tub or in the race, the second because it often rains here in the fall and winter and summer and spring.

Speaking of the race, that's what you go up on in a canoe and what you get thrown into. It's a neck of water that projects into the land and doesn't stop till it has gone all the way. They say that it is pretty, up a ways. I don't know. I've never been up. My blanket has and so has my sweater and my pants and my shoes, in fact everything but by green cap. That's what frats are for, I guess, to give the upperclassmen something to wear. It gives you an awfully friendly feeling to see your shoes dancing around the Rainbow when you have to keep your feet in your pocket. Say, speaking of feet, I heard of a college once where the girls darned all the boys' socks. Gee, I wish they would do it here.

The Rainbow's a place where you

pay a nickle for a dance. It's cheap at that, but you can't expect to have a very good time for less than 15 cents. Some of the faculty don't approve of it. I don't blame them the floor is kind of rough.

They told me at my frat that I had to go out for something, so I brought in a pumpkin and a chicken! We had a good dinner next day. We had girls there too besides. But that wasn't enough, the fellows said I'd have to go out for some activity, so I said I'd go out for dancing. But they sent me out for football. I didn't last long, at that. I guess Bezdek didn't like my playing. So I got a trombone and went out for the band and now the band is out for me. Perfect said I showed marked ability for a beginner but he asked me to show a little more absence. So I've gone out for the Emerald. That's the paper everybody writes for and nobody gets. Don't look for anything about yourself in it for it doesn't print news.

We've got fraternity songs about getting sweethearts and wives, but the only thing I've ever gotten is a post. It's pretty hard to get anything else here. I got drafted for the freshmen acquaintance party and I got the kind of a co-ed that has been a miss so long that the only thing that she has missed is the mister. Just after the party had begun I gave her a nickle and told her to ride home on the car for I remembered I had to sweep my room. She hasn't spoke to me since. I've never seen her since so I haven't spoken to her either.

So long,

TONY.

Eugene, Oregon.
December 5, 1914.

Dear Hank:

It's great being a soph. You can wear hats and you don't have to work and you get looked up to by all of the frosh.

Say there sure are some queens in the freshman class this year—one especially. She's one of those girls that have eyes and eye lashes and aspirations. You know that kind of girls. I put my name in the Emerald as often as I can and she sees it every time. I go over to her house every afternoon and we sit on the davenport. Eating used to be my specialty, but since I met her I'd rather sit on a davenport. When I first started to go there to that sorority house they used to be glad to see me and the girls all smiled encouragingly, but now they don't pay much attention. They act just like I was a fixture. But time goes awfully fast in the afternoon and in the evening I write her notes because she can't have any dates week nights. Gee, I'm glad there are girls like her.

There are two recreation places here, the library and the graveyard. Every week night I go to the library to get reference books, for she'll be there too, to do the same thing. I can do a lot in a short time there, if some of the library force doesn't use its force. I can help do her French in the basement, too, and when the upperclassmen aren't looking we two can slip out and walk home by way of the graveyard. We'll be sure to meet all of her upperclassmen there, but we don't worry, for they don't either. I'm never afraid of the graveyard at night when she is with me—and there is always a crowd there.

I go out most every night now and swipe flowers for her. The people of the town don't seem to mind. Why

should they when they have such a nice college? They ought to be glad that we would come to college here and not go to Washington.

One of our upperclassmen told me that if I didn't get in and work I'd flunk out of college. I wonder what they expect of a fellow here. I guess they expect you to work yourself to death and then write for the Emerald besides. I study all the time I have extra. Some of these profs do nothing but ball a fellow out. When they aren't talking about Athena they are talking about your girl.

Just as soon as I can get up enough nerve I am going to ask Lulu to wear my pin. I meant to yesterday but I sat all afternoon and couldn't get up enough nerve so I left and am going to do it today. I thing I'll get to work and quit college and get married.

Your friend,

TONY.

Eugene, Oregon.
December 5, 1915.

Friend Hank:

I tell you I am off with the women. Lulu served me a dirty trick. She got married this summer and didn't come back to school, so I am off with them all. I write verse low, satirical stuff sort of like Bob Service and the kind Shaw writes. They print most of it in the Emerald and I hit all the girls in college without them knowing who it is.

All of us juniors here in college wear corduroys and try to look as tough as we can, it makes the girls look up to us and respect us. We stand out there by the library and smoke between classes and every girl that goes by sort of ducks her head and scoots. I guess they are all afraid we will write poetry about them or something. Girls and women sure aren't needed. I am glad I have outgrown them.

I guess I'll run for some office this year so that I will have something to stick behind my name in the Oregonian.

All of us fellows hang around the club and watch the people go to Rainbow to dance. I sure am glad that I am off with the women so that I don't have to spend all of my money on them.

Am going to gym all the time now. Forgot to do it in my frosh year so have to do it now.

Say, the library is some picture gallery. Sometime I go up there in the evening and sit at the newspaper table and watch people come in and out. I always think of my best verse there.

Well this is enough,

ANTHONY.

Eugene, Oregon.

Hank:

You should see my mustache. It's a beauty. All of the senior men wear them, you know. It makes one look so distinguished. I had to blacken it with a eyebrow pencil at first, but then I put some tonic on it. I guess I got more on one side than on the other for it's quite bushy on one side. But I have decided to wax it now. I tell you they look fine under a sombrero. I have a lig one with a dent in the crown.

An taking ten hours education this year so that I will be able to teach after I graduate. It's kind of strenuous but when I can sleep about half of the class hour I don't mind much.

This college stuff is getting on my nerves. I feel that I have outgrown

it all. It's all like child's play to me. When a fellow has been at a college for about four years, he knows the ropes and gets on to all the gags of the profs. Me for the world and schoolteaching after this year.

I'm off with the poetry now. I write editorials and letters mostly now. Takes less effort. If it wasn't for my mustache I am sure I'd have not come back this year, but I am glad I did for I've found the girl for me at last. She isn't the kind of girl you read about or the kind fools write about but she can cook and she's an all-round girl. She is good and substantial and she doesn't want a career like most of these college women.

Well I guess that's all. I don't get much time to write much now with education and a mustache,

HANK.

Thin Climax.

(Continued from page one)

The net was free, but the engine had not started. Andrew blundered at the wheel.

Then the boat rose up and up. The men held fast; and over and over and down and down they tossed like a peanut shell. The boat hit bottom and went apart. Wreckage, mere fragments, floated. Near each other two head appeared. Hard by, jumped and bobbed an empty can that had held drinking water. Both men reached for it. Beneath their weight it ducked from sight.

"Take it, Andy. I'll grab the net. The corks will keep my head afloat."

"You'll tangle up and drown."

"What matter? I've a chance. Thank Selma, for me, for her love." Swearing, he swam into the darkness. Andrew siezed the can.

On the cliff far above a watchman had noted a gillnetter's light close-in to the danger line. Suddenly it blinked to gleam no more and the thunder of a surge came up the to him.

A telephone call to the life saving station below, "A boat gone over on the edge of the spit. Hard in the Head." Seconds later, the "Dreadnaught" turned her nose to sea.

They found Andrew safe enough; his arm over the can, head above water, tired, but conscious. "Down there—in the net. My brother."

They found the net, too—a long line of floats that gleamed and sank in the light of the lantern—. In one place no floats were visible. Pulling on the web, they dragged a sodden something over the side. It was Pete. Meshes bound round and round. His feet were tangled past kicking in the slippery flax Arms and hands were caught. He had drowned bound tight. As they cut him free, one of the men took a small object from one hand. It was a tin box. On the lid was the word "Climax."

EARTH WALLS.

Dreamless they lie in their graves alone.

Under the grasses that sweep in the sun,

Living and loving and dying are done,—

And they hear only faint foot-falls, The far-away, faint foot-falls.

Living is learning to discount the gleam,

Loving is sailing a shallowing stream, Dying is coming at even to dream

In the sheltering warm, earth walls, The welcoming, warm, earth walls.

—GRACE EDGINGTON.