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# Caste Must Go From College Life

## Abolition of Clubs at Princeton First Step Toward Complete Democracy of Colleges



President Woodrow Wilson of Princeton

POSSIBLY our young men may have to study at college in future!

Have you heard the dictum? Like a bombshell it has crashed from the quiet walls of Princeton. Like the volley of the Minute Men, it will probably go on reverberating until heard around the world.

Death to the club life which has been in so many cases one of the main incentives to attending America's largest colleges—this and the total abolition of caste, so dear to the junior and senior, is what the thunders proclaim. A committee, of which President Woodrow Wilson is chairman, has so advised, and the idea has been adopted by the Princeton trustees, including ex-President Grover Cleveland.

According to this plan, either the thirteen college clubs at Princeton must be abolished, or the clubhouses must be turned over to the college, to be presided over by professors and to be occupied by the despised freshman and sophomore on terms of equality with the high-caste men who built and furnished them.

One of these clubs represents \$125,000; others are nearly as luxurious; their aggregate value is about \$500,000. Membership in them is regarded as a greater mark of distinction than taking class honors in studies. In fact, in the opinion of Dr. Wilson, the college has come to be a sort of tail to the club kite.

Back of the Princeton innovation lies a modern tendency to make a business of going to college, to abolish such romantic ideas as hazing and secret societies and to substitute the methods of the corporation.

Will the members of the student body submit? Or will they fight? This cannot be told until September, when the trustees and students try to "get together" on the club question.

Meanwhile, undergraduates and graduates all over the country are excited to the eruptive point, for if the plan works at Princeton why should it not become general?

AS NOTABLE as the development of the American college itself has been the growth of the college club. Such a big institution has it become that to abolish it will mean nothing short of a social revolution. And the abolition will probably not be accomplished without a struggle. Come it must, for the forces of reform have gone too far to permit of retreat.

Any one who has been to college or had an opportunity of studying college life can readily realize what it would mean to have the club destroyed—and this is but an incident in the revolution proposed.

Luxuriously settled back into the deep upholstered of an antique chair, pipe hanging comfortably from lips, eyes closed in reverie or perusing a piece of light literature—this is how you may see the "chappie" in the lounging room.

Or you may see him in the game room engaged in a game of billiards, bridge or dominoes; or disporting himself at the piano, or enjoying the conversation of friends in the reception room.

Can you picture this august individual living in a sort of dormitory—a "quad"—under the eye of a member of the faculty, where his reverie would be broken by the rasping voice of the unpolished "freshie," and his leisure supplanted by work?

But—more horrible still—can you for the life of you conceive of his sitting down to table with under-class men, saluting them as equals, even sharing his room with them?

Nothing ever attempted in America's collegiate annals would equal in radicalism these things which Princeton declares must come to pass.

The club is a place for enjoyment. Naturally, no one prefers it to hard study. But add to this the fact that none but the elect may be ad-



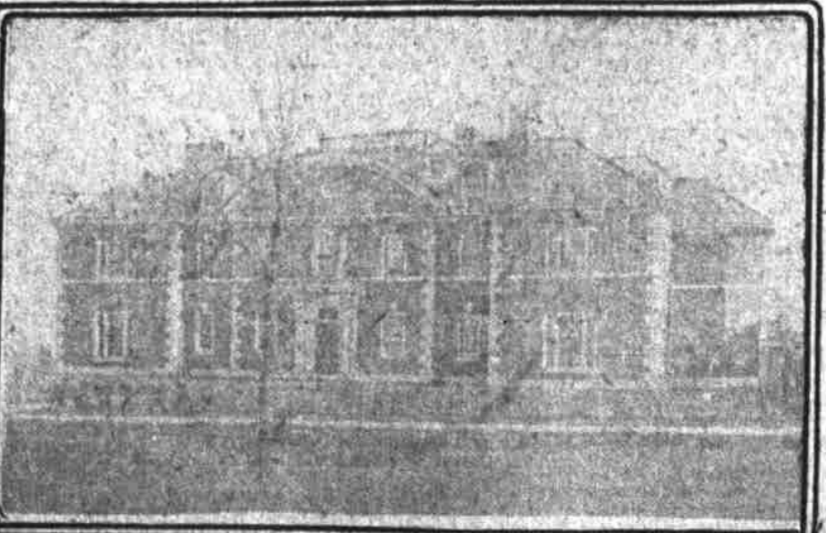
Lounging Room in the Ivy Club.



A Typical Princeton Dormitory



University Hall or Commons to be Model for 'Quads'



Cottage Club at Princeton Cost: \$125,000

mitted to a swell college club, that for a candidate to be blackballed is a calamity that may ruin his after life; that a freshman or sophomore cannot be a member, no matter how noble his family or how worthy himself—and you can realize the problem at Princeton—the problem which may soon be tackled by all of America's big colleges.

That one goes to college to study is the natural assumption; but, surprising as it seems, college professors declare that this is not so—that the majority of young people go to enjoy the social life.

Last winter this matter was considered at Princeton, the big New Jersey university which since 1739—it was the fourth institution of learning established in America—has been turning out scholars who have won credit for themselves and their alma mater.

It was presented to the trustees, of whom Grover Cleveland is one, by Woodrow Wilson, Ph.D., Litt.D., LL.D., who since his election to the presidency of the college, in 1902, has been working steadily toward democracy. He is pursuing a well-defined purpose to constitute as the chief aim of college life the acquiring of learning, and to make one's desire and ability to learn, not his social standing, the supreme and sole gauge of his success.

Prior to his coming, a long step toward democracy had been taken in providing for five graduates of the college, by election of the graduates, to hold membership on the board of trustees. This was hitting at caste above the student body—it was a blow to fossilized notions in the brains of men long out of college—perhaps never at college—who directed the affairs of the university.

And then there was another innovation which was designed as a gentle hint to the students that nothing should be placed before the academic side of their college life.

Now, before one matriculates at Princeton he must sign this pledge:

We, the undersigned, do individually and for ourselves promise, without any mental reservation, that we will have no connection whatever with any secret society, nor be present at the meetings of any secret society, of this or any other institution so long as we are members of Princeton University.

This in itself was an innovation scarcely to be excelled by the proposition to abolish clubs, for in almost every big college there are chapters with all sorts of incongruous names, bound by oaths, where bizarre initiations take place and fantastic rites are held. When the students submitted to this, the professors thought they could safely carry the work of "reform" farther.

Well, the trustees told President Wilson to go ahead with his plan, and appointed a committee to aid him. This committee has reported in detail the plan for changing the present social

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