

Writer Offers Toast To Yankee President

By DEWITT MACKENZIE
LONDON.—The ancient university town of Oxford has been seething with excitement over the naughty act of some dare-devil students who wound up what is characterized as a "hilarious evening" by inking the marble statue of the poet Shelley. One student was "sent down" for his participation in this affair, and others were punished though less seriously.

Well, how times do change! The lads of a generation ago might have recorded upon a statue the details of some mighty deed. But the mere inking of a piece of marble would not have been considered a very thrilling culmination to a night out.

I call upon the president of the United States to back me up in my claim that more spectacular and strenuous tactics were employed by the young men when he and I were in our student days.

The president can vouch to the truth of this, if he will, because I recently discovered that he was the lad who spirited a donkey into the upper region of Black River academy, in the not so dim and distant past.

It has taken me more than a quarter of a century to identify the unknown hero at whose shrine I worshipped as a student in that fine old Vermont institution, in Ludlow, on the Black River. Even now I should not have succeeded in my quest, had not one of his friends "peached" on him.

It is a far reach from the fog-enshrouded London of today to the sun-kissed, emerald hills of the Vermont of our boyhood, but neither war nor revolution, with both of which I am familiar, has brought me a greater thrill than I got here in England when I finally learned who performed that deed.

Incidentally, Mr. Coolidge was indirectly responsible for my suspension from the classic halls of B. R. A., my downfall having been brought about by a somewhat unsuccessful emulation of one whose name was unknown, but whose achievement was cherished as furnishing the most glorious page in the history of our academy. But I do not hold that against the president, for while I failed to scale the heights to which he had ascended with, and perhaps because of, his donkey, yet I had tried, and I was proud—am still proud—in my defeat.

It couldn't have been so very long after Mr. Coolidge's time in Black River Academy that I entered there, but even then his feat had been emplaced in letters of gold among the school traditions. As I have said, nobody knew the author of the donkey classic, but he must have caught the fragrance of the incense which was burned at the altar of the unknown.

I will not burden the reader with details of my own attempt to follow in young Calvin's footsteps and gain immortal fame. Suffice it to say, that while it was a noble effort, it didn't involve a four-legged donkey, for the simple reason that none of this species was available. By the way, Mr. President, where did you get your moke?

In my time there was only one of these long-eared animals in the district. Vermont always did have to import her asses. He lived two miles down on the Ludlow-Proctorsville road. He was a perfectly good donkey, with a wonderful, raucous voice (I doubt if the animal Mr. Coolidge enticed within the academy walls was any finer), and I frequently looked on him with longing eyes, but he really was too far from the school to be useful to me.

So I devised another scheme. The scheme was all right, but I violated the eleventh commandment by getting found out. That was where "Silent Cal" had it on me. He didn't talk.

I was told to go home to the Methodist parsonage in Proctorsville and stay there until I apologized. My clergyman father said I had differences of opinion about my making reparation in this form. He said that if I didn't apologize in 24 hours, I must certainly be put to work in the local woolen mills at a dollar and a quarter a day. Mr. Coolidge will remember

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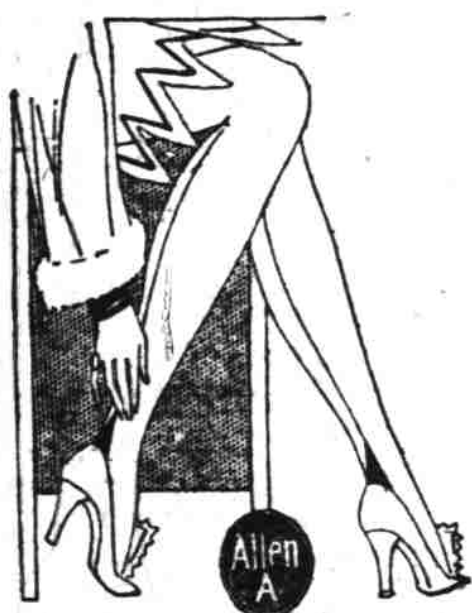
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