

DALHOUSIE Gazette

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On Entering University

By G. L. Brodersen
(Condensed from a CBC Talk,
June, 1952)

The following article, which is condensed from a CBC talk by G. L. Brodersen appeared last week in "The Manitoban", student publication of the University of Manitoba. Although it was intended for students entering that university, it has a good deal of topical interest for new Dalhousians.

Tonight, I am going to talk primarily to the men and women who will be entering . . . I almost said the ivy halls, but we have little or no ivy on the Fort Garry campus at any rate . . . to the men and women who will be entering University in the fall, and I am going to try to say something on the vexed topic of how to make the most of your University course, what to do, what to expect, and still more what not to do and what not to expect.

I said, quite deliberately, men and women, not boys and girls. For the University assumes you are, upon entering, men and women, adult, of years of discretion: it may be that we are sometimes over-optimistic in this assumption; but it is there. We assume that you are grown up, able of your own initiative to start to carve the career of your choice. Now, clearly, discretion, being adult, assumes also the willingness to undertake responsibility. And what you make of University and you career there, is in the long run your responsibility . . . not ours; it is not basically our job to drag you through examinations, but yours to drag yourselves; it is not our job to hand out or dictate notes for you to memorize and regurgitate on a test or examination. That is where you come in. Without the will to learn and the will to work, you will fail; but it is you who must will it. The responsibility is yours, the choice is yours. If you come, ready to absorb, eager to learn, willing to be taught, you will absorb, you will learn; but if you come with an "I know it all, no one can teach me anything. I'm modern" attitude, then no one can teach you and ultimately no one will be interested in trying to teach you. The choice or attitude is again yours.

You mustn't expect to find things the same as they have been at high school; for there is a world of difference between the two.

In the first place in high school, for the most part you are taught; in University you learn. Most of your work will be done out of class; all your reading and preparation, for example, your background reading in the library, and more important still, your thinking. Make no mistake about it, the man who can think for himself in a University from the start has the edge—he is the man most likely to make a success of his time there. We don't look for Einsteins or Aristotles — just plain clear thinking in the material of your course. If you disagree with an instructor, don't be afraid to say so.

Remember too that professors are not a race apart, however strange some of them seem; they like questions that spring from a

genuine interest, and they are always willing to help . . . Perhaps I shouldn't have said "always" . . . after all they are human, they may have a toothache or the baby may be sick, or any of the thousand other ills that flesh is heir to may be their lot. Sometimes you have to pick your time. But usually questions are welcomed — in or out of class — in the junior years at any rate.

Another difference you will find from high school is the method of instruction. Lectures are what the name suggests — lectures. And it is your job to get as much from them as you can, in ideas, in facts sometimes, in an attitude or an arrangement of ideas. Sometimes you won't get very much — but usually there'll be something to cling on to, one small pearl among the chaff.

And there is, at once, another big change from high school. Not merely are you on your own, as far as learning goes, but you have far more spare time . . . and there are common rooms, calling, snack bars, the student union building, the gymnasium, the cafeteria . . . there are all these. And there is also the library. Don't forget it. Use it. That's what it's for. And you will find the staff only too willing to help you find what you want; a large library can be a terrifying place at first, but if you once find your way around, you'll go back again. And that's where you really get your work done, where you start to be a student in the fuller sense of the term. Apart from that, the library is almost the only place on the campus, outside the class room, where you can be quiet when you want to.

Up to now, I may have given the impression that a University is a place where you do nothing but work, where you go from classroom to library, from lab to bus station in a constant search for information, slowly bursting with accumulated facts and weighed down with ever-increasing notes, where you wade disconsolately through university calendars and knock hopefully on office doors, where you spend four years not waiting for the plums to fall in your lap but continually shaking the branches of the tree of learning until you reach the ripest fruit of all — the rich fulfilment of a degree.

This is of course not so . . . or at most it is only one side of the story. For not all your education comes from the class room and library . . . comes from extra curricula activities, from association with other people, students and faculty alike, with similar or different aims, backgrounds and interests. It is an education, even, in itself to travel to the campus six days a week by bus — it is good for the spirit, and strengthening for the arms, it improves the soul, it produces tolerance and endurance . . . and an infinite degree of patience. All this is part of a university life and the man or woman who misses all of this . . . misses a great deal.

These are organized by faculties for their own students, and for the University at large by the University of Manitoba Students' Union. Here you will find everything from Choral Society to Rifle Club, from German Club, to curling; for the budding actor there is the stage society major production and faculty festival, for the would-be writer there is The Manitoban and a very high grade artistic production called Creative Campus; there is the Debating Union and the Fencing Club — the apparent connection here is only superficial — there are facilities for almost every organized sport from tennis to tiddleywinks. And the wise freshman will take part in several of these activities at first, trying them out, dropping them according to his interest or lack of it. But they can take too much time. Here, too, as in so many other things, you will have to use your judgment and act on your own responsibility.

And in the long run, I suppose, making a success of college comes

Return

So we are back again,
Sucked, like pale moths,
Into the busy throb of this surrealist life.
We have come back again,
Where futile knowledge,
and the last feeble flutterings of frustrated Humanism
Will be poured over us
Until saturated, we shall absorb a little,
We have come back again,
full of animal high spirits
and Ambition!

T. C. S.

TO THE EDITOR

The Editor,
Dalhousie Gazette,
Halifax, N. S.

Dalhousie University,
Halifax, N. S.,
September 30, 1952.

Dear Sir,

As a graduate and student of this university I was overcome with joy by the observation that the new spiritual awakening that is today emancipating mankind from the manacles of antiquated standards of value has at last arrived at Dalhousie. That this is true is demonstrated in the placards being worn by new students. The authors of these gems of art are to be congratulated for their magnificent creations (despite the claim of the unappreciative that they are a result of the sadistic impulses of emotional adolescents). For too long has the human race been enslaved by such ridiculous superstitions as that of the dignity and worth of each human personality, but a new day is dawning! Evidence of this may be found in such phenomena as the rhetorical eloquence of that godly, American orator, Joseph McCarthy; or the ennobling mob-riots in all forward-thinking nations. The universities, ever reticent to true progress, remained dormant until this spring when the glorious "panty-raids" at several universities released the shackles of this important segment of our society. Now through the medium of the placard this divine revelation has appeared at Dalhousie. Oh! The joyful ecstasy one experiences from such exquisite poetry as,

"No mind.
No interests.
No sex."

and sublime grandeur as,

"We don't know whether he is male,
or female, so he must be a —"

The principle aim of this letter is to anticipate a few of the possible charges which might be made by those yet fettered by out-moded traditions. The first might take the form of a contention that the present method of introducing students to an institution of culture and learning (?) might cause some of them to become disgusted with not only culture and learning but with the institution itself. Some might go as far as to suggest that some will leave Dalhousie and take back their students' council fees. That such a tragedy might even be conceived! In reply to this I should like to point out that the realization that Dalhousie is in the vanguard of the new moral awakening will undoubtedly create in the hearts of the majority of students such an affection for our alma mater as to more than compensate for the prejudiced objections of an unenlightened minority. It is possible that some may assert that a university ought to attempt to instill an appreciation of and a desire for eternal values even where they exist in only the most rudimentary of forms. This assertion may be easily refuted as it is merely another expression of the same out-moded doctrines. All but the most uninformed must acknowledge that the real purpose of a contemporary university is to provide a pleasant relaxation during a period of two to nine years for those who propose to later perform the most onerous and righteous tasks in our society (such as the construction of intricate networks of neon-lights or the production and distribution of bubble-gum). In addition, of course, for a certain financial consideration and a few hours spent in incoherent scribbling one may obtain a parchment setting forth one's great abilities and high qualifications. (Some, however, are less desirable as they are written in exotic and unintelligible gibberish). Finally a fearful few might allege that the Senate might be motivated by such activities as the creation and wearing of these gems of esthetic excellence to restrict student activity. If such an unlikely event were to ensue we must meet it with tolerant equanimity and patiently suggest, "Gentlemen, get hep!" If that august body yet persisted, I would suggest counteraction after the fashion of that used so successfully in Western Canada by some of the Doukhobour sect.

As many oppose too frequent change, I propose that other innovations of a similar nature be carried out at this time. I submit a partial list which could be amended and added to those with greater foresight than I. The first two are concerned with the Dalhousie Glee and Dramatic Society. First, let this worthy organization discontinue its practice of presenting a work of Shakespeare or some other passé playwright and instead present a dramatic arrangement of one of Mickey Spillane's literary masterpieces. Secondly, let Gilbert and Sullivan be dispensed with in favor of a musical production featuring the arts immortalized by Sally Rand and Gypsy Rose Lee. The next two suggestions have to do with the raising of money for university purposes. To increase attendance at football games let us add the following attraction at half-time: the bringing unto the field a few slightly undernourished tigers (symbolizing Dalhousie) whose hunger may be satisfied by the devouring of some of the most appetizing freshettes. Further, I suggest that for the purpose of attracting benefactors for the university that the following attraction be added to the Munro Day celebrations: a flagpole-sitting contest with Dr. Kerr and the deans of the various faculties as participants. Finally,

(Last proposal of writer deleted at editor's discretion. Any interested student may read it at the Gazette office.)

May freedom reign!

Sincerely yours,
Lloyd Canty,
Arts '52.

The Worshipper

Her name was Gilda, and he thought as he gazed at her that she was a Princess, nay a goddess of the North. She smiled brilliantly at him, and her soft sea-blue eyes sparkled with the many lights caught up in their impossible depths.

Who was she, and how had he, an ugly misshapen creature had the wonderful good fortune to meet her, here on the top of the world, here where the eye met nothing but ice and snow and eternal night.

She laughed again, and then the dazzling brilliance of the Northern Lights shone full upon the spun gold of her hair. Gilda, he breathed, and he moved forward, as spellbound by that gold as a moth caught by the flame.

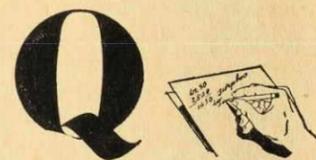
But the look in his eyes terrified her for he was the first white man she had ever seen and his ugliness repelled her. Her eyes dilated with fear, and she fell backwards onto the snow. He ran stumbling on, for he knew that this was no ordinary girl. He had always worshipped Beauty, but especially the elusive beauty of esthetic Womanhood.

Yet he had always been laughed at because of his deformities, and driven away into the ugly parts of the city. Boys had thrown stones at him and set their dogs to chase him. Thus driven from the haunts of men, he had wandered 'round the whole world. He had at various times in his wanderings been enslaved by Italian Mermaids, Siamese dancing girls, twinkling Polyneans, Sultry India Maidens, dark haired sirens off the coast of Greece, and blackeyed Romany Gypsies. But they had caught him and humiliated him. He had been made to serve Ferdinand and Isabella in the court of Spain, he had gone with Richard on his Crusades, he had been made to do amusing tricks for the first Queen Elizabeth of England, but all that time his trampled soul had burned within him.

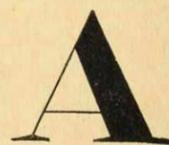
Now, however, the cold blazing Beauty of the Snow Maiden had dispelled all his pain. He was conscious only of supreme joy. He ran forward, determined to catch her and worship her as his Goddess forever.

But she was no Goddess, only a girl, but a girl surpassing even the Moon in Beauty, and she screamed and ran from him.

But one must not run very fast or very far when one is on the very top of the world and although she had been born and lived all her life in this white world, in her fear she was oblivious of all caution and so ran right off the face of the earth. He followed her in the madness of his passion and together they fell through space and so they have been falling ever since.



How Can I Start
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By Planned
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The basis of an investment plan in most cases should be life insurance. It meets in a sound and regular way the real objectives of investment — savings for the future, a retirement income and money for your family should anything happen to you. What is more, life insurance achieves these ends economically and without worry or risk. Discuss with a Mutual Life of Canada representative a life insurance investment plan for your future.

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down to this . . . learning to use opportunities, learning to put first things first, thinking out clearly why you want a University career at all, making your own plan of study and sticking to it. It means in effect simply this . . . learning to use your new found freedom right; and freedom can be a dangerous thing in the wrong hands.
But not if you think. Once you come to college, whether you stand or fall, sink or swim, succeed or fail is up to you. So . . . good luck.

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