



The Campus Roundup

by Windy O'Neill

Some time ago, we were looking through the Dalhousie calendar and in the listing of our beloved staff we became quite confused at what seemed to be a type of code following the names of our esteemed professors. Knowing them to be modest men (the more educated and capable they are, the less impressed they are with themselves), we can sympathize with their embarrassment in parading, after the names of their particular dynasty, such hieroglyphics as (Belf), (Cantab) (Oxon, (Harv), (Manch).

Wondering how long this has been going on, we wandered into the stacks and consulted some old Dal calendars. Back in 1865 we noted that the lights of the teaching staff boasted such solitary emblems as M.A., LL.D., and Esq. For many years, just below the distinguished men of letters, and in print of equal size, read "John Wilson—Janitor". Mr. MacLeod and Mr. O'Brien should look to their laurels—after all they have acquired the title of Master of the Rolls. In the 1890's, came two degrees usually from different countries, which showed the boys were widely travelled and, of course, therefore well educated.

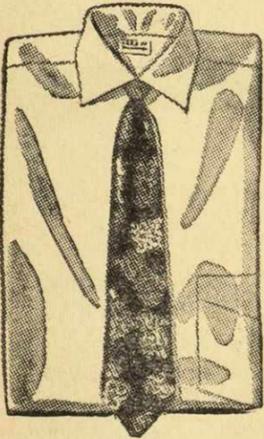
The logical question is—how did this come about? After reading an article in a magazine of wide circulation we have no doubt that the Excited States to the south had no small hand in the degradation of the diploma. In the land of our democratic neighbors even education is democratic. Anyone (with the price) can have a D.D., a Ph.D., and assorted degrees. One slicker even set up his own university and managed to have it recognized by the New York State authorities and commenced to sell Bachelors of This and That for sixty-five piastres, and Doctors of Divinity and Philosophy for one hundred. Such a thing is only good sense—look at the work it saves.

With all these degrees floating around a lowly BA begins to look pretty sick, and even a Ph.D. has a slight pallor. Of course, the only way to separate the worthy degrees from the dollar diplomas was to place the name of the dispensing institution thus—B.V.D. (Stanfield) or R.A.G.G. (Mop). However, the degree has descended from a symbol of achievement, to a reference of qualification. No man could possibly give the right slant of history or law without a BA. We look to the future with trembling anticipation. When the competition gets keen, perhaps THE brackets will become longer, conveying more information. It will probably be thus—J. Doaks MA (Oxon, std 5) or B. Bobbitty M.A (Cantab, std. 15 no. in class 80) or B. Bobbitty MA (Harv. 60% but lots outside activit.) or even B. Boo MA (Manch, natch 67th sick two months).

OSMOSIS DEPARTMENT: The thought just struck us of the horrible plot against Cape Breton extant these many years. Cape Bretoners, don't you realize they are cutting up your esteemed battleground and shipping it abroad where it is burned? Cape Bretoners, arise and defend your beloved mound or you will all become fish!

GETTING NEITHER HERE NOR THERE: Of late, there has been a curtailment of communication on the Intercolonial Railway due to a (yuk! yuk!) coal shortage. Some of the railways of the Maritimes are built on top of great sections of dusty diamonds sometimes called Cape Breton confetti. With this in view, heightened by Ottawa's increasing disregard, we suggest a slogan for the seaboard provinces—"Martimers, unite! You have nothing to lose but your trains."

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"Pirates" Successful Production

by Laurie Allison

This year's production of Gilbert and Sullivan, the "Pirates of Penzance", although the fourth of the Glee Club series, was the first operetta produced by a professional director. The University is fortunate in having Prof. Hamer as director of musical activities among the students. However, it is interesting to note that, as one looks back over previous productions, this performance has some qualities that the others lacked, and at the same time fell short of some of the virtues of "Pinafore" and "Patience".

Among the soloists this year, the men were particularly outstanding, while only one of the women, Diane Parker, matched them in performance. The same comment applies to the chorus; for all their numbers, the female voices were weak, largely because there was no strong leader to guide them in either range. The men, however, were strong in both voice and action. Here is where a professional director can either make or break a show, and Prof. Hamer did not fail either students or the general public. With the keen insight of a master in his field, Prof. Hamer maintained a brisk flow of movement throughout the entire operetta. The dialogue seldom slowed in pace and the vitality of the music never lacked humour and polish.

Gordon Coll, Dick Miller, and Roy de Young turned in the best all-round performances among the men. Coll, as the pirate and king, moved about the stage with the naturalness and ease of an old hand. His strong baritone voice and clear diction were pleasing to the ear, but above all Coll's attitude toward his part spelled success for him; he adopted an almost devil-may-care expression, quite in keeping with his brusque and worldly character. Yet Coll never over-played his part, and his somewhat melodramatic reading of the humour in both dialogue and music was always amusing.

Dick Miller, as Major-General Stanley, was required to go through some fantastic verbal gymnastics in his patter song, and he succeeded very well. Miller has a warm, and pleasing tenor, which did not always project far enough out into the gymnasium to be heard by all the audience. Perhaps the fear of muddling up his lines if he sang with force kept him from doing just this. An air of false pompousness made his character only more amusing. This air of false pompousness was carried off in wonderful style by Roy de Young, as the police sergeant. Roy sang and acted his amusing and satirical part with fine confidence and understanding, and his robust baritone voice, especially in his "policeman's lot", was received with justified enthusiasm.

Diane Parker, with a minor part, was the finest performer among the women. The part of Ruth is very important in the operetta, and Diane gave it the warmth and understanding it deserved; her voice was beautiful, a rich and confident contralto.

The roles of Mabel and Frederick, the lovers of the story, were generally well played, although not as successfully as those people mentioned above. Ishbel Campbell, pleasing to the eye, and a smooth actress, had not the voice, however, to make the part of Mabel stand out as it should. Although a trained singer, Ishbel's voice has an unfortunate tremolo which is quite worrisome to the ear. This is due to the fact that the part was written for a coloratura soprano, while Ishbel possesses a lyric soprano. In the light of this, Ishbel deserves much credit for a role not suited to her own voice. Within her own range her voice is quite pleasant.

The tenor role of Frederick presents yet another problem. Ronald Beare has a fine, well trained, lyrical tenor voice, and showed itself to great advantage in the "Pirates". Musically, Beare was well cast, but not so dramatically, for he is not suited to lighter roles. In comedy, he seems unable to relax, and to appear natural in his stage movements. In "Don Giovanni" last

summer, with a more straightforward role, Ronald Beare was seen and heard to more advantage. The fault is perhaps not his own, for many singers are restricted to one type of role. It is a pity then, that the owner of so fine a voice could not have been as fine an actor as singer, especially for Gilbert and Sullivan.

Stan Pearson, as the Lieutenant to the Pirate King, proved wonderful support for his superior, through his adequate voice, and above all by his stage antics, and sympathetic understanding of his part. In a sense, he is THE clown of the operetta, a fierce pirate with a "Puckish" side to his nature.

Three more of the daughters of the Major-General were generally well played by Anne Thexton, as Kate; Marnie Stevenson as Isabel; and Audrey Powell as Edith. What these three ladies lacked in volume, they made up for in beauty.

The girl's chorus has been mentioned before, but it might be added that their movements were executed with a surprising grace and charm. The beautiful, child-like simplicity of the girls' was the effect Prof. Hamer strove for, and they maintained it, until such time as the men fell into their clutches.

Occasional vocal roughness can easily be forgiven when the overall picture given us was so fine. The same applies to the men, who sang and acted with all their vigour at their command. The only incongruous incident applies to the police squad, who at times looked as untrained as a group of raw recruits on the parade square for the first time in the service. Their entrances and exits were very well done, but their attitudes onstage in the intervals is the point of this remark. The full chorus was outstanding in the unaccompanied, "Hail, Poetry", toward the end of the first act, and it revealed a bass section that has never been heard before in our choruses. This bass tone gave the entire an amazing depth of sound.

The orchestra, followed Prof. Hamer's spirited pace with marked agility, and it set the tempo too, for all the action onstage. The score was never sacrificed to spoken dialogue, and thus the music was consistently even in mood throughout the entire operetta. The stage settings, colourful and fresh in appearance, provided an excellent background for the action of the play.

The "Pirates", then, was an excellent production. (Continued on page four)

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