

Feature Page

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Arts Society sponsored Film Committee gave birth to its films Tuesday last at eight fifteen o'clock. We who had not been supplied with maps of the Alexander Campus had much difficulty in finding the "Theatre" which by the way is not done in the classical motif and hasn't even an usher.

We arrived at eight twenty-five and were not present during the "delivery" and they were timid souls who opened the door and looked about for seats while someone spoke of where the mississippi goes down, down, down . . . Once inside however the perfume of informality soothed us and we were able to sit and smoke and become part of the congenial atmosphere that even made the pot-bellied stoves look like pieces of statuary.

Where the mississippi goes down, down, down; was a Tennessee Valley Authority's documentary film. The actual name of the film we arrived too late to note.

The photographic art in the film was great enough to enthrall anyone in the least interested in the techniques and the art of form and content. Some of the scenes were reminiscent of old copies of Fortune Magazine and its photographic treatments of land, sea and air. So this film, we think, was one of the few of its type we have sat through and not wished we could get the hell out without losing our seats or missing the next part of the show.

Of course because of its type it was not designed primarily to entertain but to be informative. Yet as we have said the art and the music were superb.

The feature film presented was "The Wedding of Palo". After it finished, we were left wondering why, if the Norwegians could do

that with Eskimos and in Greenland, Hollywood couldn't with the American Glamour girl and any location on earth. Well anyway if you feel like we do, you wanted to get up and get mad at Warner Brothers and MGM and go to Hollywood instantly and show them how to do it, then you realized that you were not the person who knew how. It was someone else, Hans Scheub the photographer and Emil Roesen the writer of the musical score and the Royal Symphonic Orchestra, and others who have grown used to five minute credit periods do not remember.

An analogy might be made between such films as this, and the typical film made for the movie-going public's consumption in this country, using Miss Bergman and Mae West.

The story was one of the commonest in the world. Two boys and one girl, one good boy, one bad boy and the girl all that any Eskimo could desire (she was very pretty). The story was complete with anticlimaxes and adventurous feats. In one particular spot the evil character was about to do something desperate to the beautiful maiden and everyone expected the other chap to come along and chastise him, instead another girl came out of nowhere and gave the bad guy hell, then someone began yelling that the salmon were coming in and the whole village ran for the shore to spear fish.

Later at the festival the contest was held between the two who had quarreled. It consisted of a ridiculous contest. (U. N. please note). The better man was he who ridiculed the other most forcefully. Palo was receiving most of the cheers when his opponent up and stabbed him with

a goodly sized knife. The heroine missed the last act however, since she had been borne away by her family (they didn't want to lose such a good housekeeper to Palo) and so the hero was left alone and wounded at that.

All this may seem to indicate a very much "I've come to collect the rent type plot, yet it held the hardened movie goers until this one who was supposed to take a few notes, let his pencil drop to the floor. Probably it is still there.

On thinking it over, we believe there could have been very few people who saw the film who would not say, "Let's have more Palos". If they were asked about it all. We enjoyed the film and yet, almost unconsciously we have gained a great knowledge of the Eskimo, his law, his food, his home, his art, his rituals and a hundred other things that make a "People."

A few credits to those who made Tuesday evening possible, to Professor Neagle who gave his previous film society experience and much time and work toward the organizing of the project, to Miss Jarvis who gave of her time and abundant energy in organizing and maintaining interest in the early stages of the forming of the embryo, also for the running of the projector, to Dalton Camp, president of the Arts Society, which sponsored the film society's movie, to Fred Collier and his aides on the film committee for their splendid work in organizing the presentation.

It is understood that Mr. Camp who went in search of a bulb, a part for the projector, which at one time picked an inopportune moment to break down, pursued the bulb seller, an elusive gentleman, so relentlessly that when he did finally reach him by means of the telephone, the man said, "Yes I'll get it for you but would you please hurry, my house is on fire."

RE-BIRTH OF LEARNING

Not long ago in a classroom lecture the phrase, "the cloistered University", was applied to present higher educational institutions. Such a phrase carries much connotation and might be applied to many facets of the University. Among other views, it might mean that we in college are sheltered from reality in life until we graduate, or it might mean that the courses we study are inclined to be narrow in their outlook.

I immediately thought of the cloistered monasteries, the seats of learning of the Middle Ages before actual universities developed to any extent. Dominated by the monastic system, a student of the fourteenth century lived and aesthetic life and not narrow learning. The things he studied were not of his own choice; he learned by rote what was given him. He wasted time in vain repetition. He studied Latin, but it had to apply to the Church. It was heretical to study Greek. Original thinking was discouraged . . . That would imply that the education handed down by the Church was incomplete or mistaken.

The phrase, "the cloistered University", today is very apt and timely. It can apply especially to our science courses. What do our science students learn in college that will help them in life? . . . or in facing the world's problems and getting an understanding of the world unless they do much outside reading and study? Our science students have the busiest schedule of any. They run from class to class and from lab to lab in a mad race for facts. These facts will help them to get a job or to make future scientific contributions to the world, but do the students learn to think? Dr. Conant, president of Harvard University, a scientist who helped develop nuclear fission, speaks in time of such students as "the recluses who have almost ceased to be men, and whose labors in the library or in the laboratory differ from stamp collecting only by the courtesy of a name". Even a machine will give the right answers if the proper buttons are pushed.

Science courses are not the only offenders, either. Our arts courses have the right basic idea, but in many of our classes we are presented with opinion, and we accept it without seeing it in its true relationship. Both the professors and the students are at fault in this. The instructors who inspire us to think and reason for ourselves, and who can present the whole picture of

things instead of isolated sections are the best ones to guide our education.

An investigating committee a short time ago at Harvard in a report on General Education in a Free Society recommended "the introduction of cut-across courses in the humanities, social sciences and science." This idea was adopted almost unanimously by the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Science. Dr. Conant said in a discussion group on the subject to a student of seventeenth century history, "I sometimes wonder if our two subjects aren't both the same when you get high enough into them." I am not advocating that we copy Harvard's system, but I believe that they have the right idea.

U. N. B. and many another university seem to be going in the opposite direction. Our science course this year and from now on is strictly science until something is done about it. A student gets a technical training perhaps comparable to the other universities, but he does not get an education. If the desire in a chemistry course is to get a basic idea of related subjects, the student cannot stop at biology, geology, or physics. According to Dr. Conant's idea, he would have to take every course in the university.

It is to this science course that may be applied the idea of a cloistered education of the monks in the fourteenth century in comparison to what we could learn in a broad study of wisdom. It is the subjection of an individual to a system which is extremely totalitarian in its nature. An individual loses his human aspect. He becomes another machine for the will of the state. If carried to its logical conclusion, the system would take the children out of kindergarten and start training them in specialized fields. Just think what scientific contributions a person could make after fifty years of specialized study! Then think of the state of such a society. The comic strip automations of today would be human compared to such people.

Perhaps we do not need a Renaissance to wake us up, but some revolutionary thought and action must be taken somewhere. The most effective place will be within ourselves. As soon as every student starts to do some subjective thinking on the true values of education, his methods in searching for wisdom will be different and universities will no longer be "cloistered."

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