

STUDENT LIFE AT YALE COLLEGE
UNDER THE FIRST PRESIDENT DWIGHT
(1795-1817)

BY FRANKLIN B. DEXTER

At the meeting of this Society in April, 1910, our associate, Mr. Hill, contributed an illuminating paper on "Life at Harvard a Century Ago, as illustrated by the letters and papers of Stephen Salisbury, of the Class of 1817."

I shall make no attempt to follow the lines of Mr. Hill's study, or to compare the form or spirit of the two institutions; but I shall be satisfied if I can give a suggestion of the ordinary setting of life in my own Alma Mater upwards of a century ago, and make more real the somewhat rustic figure of the homespun youth who then cultivated literature at New Haven on a little oatmeal.

The Rev. Dr. Ezra Stiles, who had filled with some renown for seventeen years the Yale Presidency, died, after a very brief illness during the spring recess, on May 12, 1795. Although only in his sixty-eighth year, and unusually active, he had long been regarded by his pupils as a man of venerable age, partly from his formal manner and dress, as well as from his insistence on a rigid observance of the social and academic distinctions of a past age which were somewhat out of date in the new Republic.

On the 25th of June, six weeks after his funeral, the Rev. Dr. Timothy Dwight, pastor of a secluded country church on Greenfield Hill, in Fairfield, twenty miles distant, a grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and

a graduate and former tutor of the College, now forty-three years of age, and thus twenty-five years President Stiles's junior, was elected to the vacant office. He accepted the call in August, and was inaugurated on Tuesday, the 8th of September, the day before the annual Commencement.

Of the inauguration ceremonies we have a brief record in the Diary of an interested spectator, afterwards the Rev. Dr. John Pierce, of Brookline, Massachusetts, then two years out of Harvard and twenty-two years of age, who notes that the new President was required to give public assent to the Saybrook Platform of Doctrine and Discipline, after which he delivered a Latin address, on the Benefits of Society.

The same kindly observer describes the illumination of the College buildings in the evening, with eight candles in each window, and a parade of the students accompanied by bands of music from half past seven to nine, and the ushering in of Commencement Day at sunrise on Wednesday with the firing of cannon and ringing of bells. He attends the exercises of graduation in the First Church, a wooden building about forty years old, which stood nearly on the site of the present Centre Church on the Public Green, and mentions the unusual decorum, as it seemed to him, on that occasion, especially that there was no clapping. He is struck with the speakers' use of more gestures than are common at Cambridge; and also remarks on Dr. Dwight's repeated blunders in reciting the brief Latin formula for conferring degrees,—slips which would have mortified the late President beyond measure. As examples of the class of subjects exhibited on such occasions, it may be recalled that the programme included a Dissertation on "The Benefits of Theatrical Establishments," by John Adams, afterwards for many years the successful Principal of Phillips Academy, Andover, and an Oration on "Female Education," by Jeremiah Day, the future Professor and President of Yale.

I referred just now to the College buildings. These were, first, the two dormitories, uniform parallelograms, of thirty-two rooms each, called "The Old College" and "The New,"—that is, the still extant Connecticut Hall, built about 1753, and Union Hall or South College, then just completed, but removed in 1893 to make room for Vanderbilt Hall. Between these two stood the Chapel (afterwards known as the Athenæum, and also removed in 1893), which was then equipped with steeple and bell, and contained on the upper floor the Library, of perhaps 4,000 volumes, and in the rear of Connecticut Hall a one-story dining-hall and kitchen, later used as a chemical laboratory, and taken down in 1888.

In this last building all the students, except a few specially excused, took their meals in Commons, a somewhat barbarous and unsanitary, as well as unpopular institution, where wholesale disorders were so far as possible discouraged by the presence of unhappy tutors feeding on elevated platforms, and by such devices as the exclusive use of pewter instead of glass and china. It was found, nevertheless, that a majority of the ordinary cases of College discipline originated in the Hall, and in connection with certain menial services required of the students, such as the shelling of peas in their season for the use of the cooks; one minor rebellion, for instance, is on record, caused by an attempt to exact the shelling of beans also, in addition to the traditional requirement.

The two dormitories were not quite capacious enough to house all the undergraduates and a few resident graduates; and indeed that goal is still unattained; though now definitely promised.

No appropriate rooms for lectures and recitations were provided, until a new hall called the Connecticut Lyceum, was erected under Dr. Dwight, in 1803; before that date, when an entire class assembled, the Chapel had to be used, with the lecturer or instructor in the pulpit, and the same room was also apparently

required wholly or mainly for the recitations of the Senior Class, as were the Hall and Library for the two divisions of the Juniors and of the Sophomores, while the two divisions of Freshmen were probably usually disposed of in the ordinary living rooms of their Tutors.

After regular recitation-rooms were available in the Lyceum, each one of these was also utilized as a domicil for two or three needy students, who in compensation were supposed to tend the hearth-fires, and sweep and dust the premises, and this arrangement continued for many college generations.

At one end of Connecticut Hall, or on the upper floor of the Chapel, was an apparatus-room, in which was stored a heterogeneous collection of objects, ranging in value from such essentials as a telescope, an air-pump, and an electrical machine, down to a quadrant and a magic lantern. Another apartment, called the Museum, contained (besides a few valuable portraits) a very miscellaneous assortment of curiosities, impressive perhaps to a raw Freshman, and appealing to the antiquarian proclivities of President Stiles, but which under the more practical management of President Dwight and Professor Day was discreetly loaned to the proprietor of a local exhibition, and never reclaimed; this comprised an outlandish medley of paleontological specimens, stuffed animals, Indian, Chinese, and other articles of dress and furniture, a few such monstrosities as a two-headed calf and a one-eyed pig, and such traditional or historical relics as a leaf from the tomb of Virgil.

On the ground-floor of Connecticut Hall another important institution was housed, the buttery, where a recent graduate, as College Butler, dispensed to faculty and students a variety of welcome adjuncts to the functions of social life in bachelor quarters. He seems to have dealt mainly in the softer drinks, such as cider, beer, ale, porter, mead, and metheglin,—with which were offered as condiments raisins, almonds, and native nuts, loaf sugar, lemons, ginger,

honey, eggs, biscuits, cakes, and pies. Tobacco, pipes, and cigars were also main items in his stock, and apples, pears, peaches, and watermelons, in their season. In addition, pitchers, bowls, mugs, decanters, glasses, and corkscrews; a few toilet articles, like wash balls (or soap), pomatum, and black ball (for shoes); writing materials, paper, quills, and wafers; and with this enumeration we have probably nearly exhausted the butler's stock in trade.

The students' chambers were, it is safe to assert, sparsely furnished, though I can quote no inventories in evidence. Hearth-fires being universal required a large supply of wood, which was in the earlier days sawed and split by the boys themselves, and carried by them to their rooms; public sentiment seems to have looked upon the hiring of servants for such purposes as an indication of effeminacy, though later it became more usual.

A President's House had been built in 1722 near the College plot, on the site of what has recently been known as College Street Hall; but so dilapidated had this become that steps were now taken for the provision of a satisfactory substitute on land purchased for the purpose, adjoining the other College land to the northward, on the present site of Farnam Hall. Two or three inferior buildings, the town almshouse, the county jail, a barber's shop, and the like, lingered for a time on the newly acquired territory.

Dr. Dwight found in office but one Professor, Josiah Meigs, a versatile young lawyer and editor, who had just been installed on an annual appointment in the chair of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy; and a staff of three tutors, the most notable of whom was James Gould, long the head of the well-known Litchfield Law School. Professor Meigs had been a favorite of Dr. Stiles, and was a man of solid attainments; but he was unfortunately a rabid and outspoken Anti-Federalist, and consequently a thorn in the flesh to Dr. Dwight, who succeeded after a few years in

securing his transfer to another honorable position, the presidency of the new University of Georgia. Dr. Dwight, it need hardly be explained, was an ardent Federalist, in contrast to his renegade first cousin, Aaron Burr; and the Yale undergraduates were with comparatively few exceptions strongly on the same side.

The presidency thus inaugurated continued for twenty-one and one-half years, or until Dr. Dwight's death in January, 1817. In the meantime the number of students in attendance had nearly doubled (rising from about 150 to about 275), for whom six tutors had become necessary, besides three young professors, a notable trio of Dr. Dwight's own selection, Jeremiah Day, Benjamin Silliman, and James L. Kingsley, who continued in active official relation to the College for sixty-seven, fifty-four, and fifty years, respectively. A Professor of Law was also appointed (in 1802), who held office for a few years; but his duties were limited to the delivery of a dozen lectures to each Senior Class.

Meantime the College buildings were increased by the erection of the Lyceum, which provided two stories of recitation-rooms, an underground chemical laboratory, and on the third floor shelf-room in artistically planned alcoves for the Library; also Berkeley Hall, a third dormitory, ultimately known as North Middle College; a President's house; and a large building (originally designed as a hotel) for the Medical School, which was established, with a staff of four professors, in 1813.

The last surviving graduate of that era died over a quarter of a century ago, but occasional access to old diaries and letters and account-books has made it possible to form some conclusions about the spirit and details of the daily life under "Pope Dwight," as the Democrats of his day irreverently called him.

It goes almost without saying that the relations between Faculty and students were much more reserved

and formal than in the century since. President Dwight throughout his administration filled the office of College preacher, and no one at Yale has exercised a larger influence in that relation. Doubtless there were many exceptions; but abundant testimony remains to the remarkable attention with which he was followed by his volatile audience, and the unparalleled extent to which he swayed their hearts and wills. In appreciation of this sphere of influence it is only fair to remember, moreover, under what a handicap every preacher of that date labored, from the circumstance that no house of worship could be warmed in winter. One is haunted by the uncouth picture drawn by a Connecticut youth who listened to Dr. Dwight, of his appearance in the pulpit, "wrapped in a heavy brown great-coat, with three or four broad capes, and a stout belt closely buttoned around his waist," and with his hands encased in woolen mittens.

Besides his power as a preacher, Dr. Dwight made a strong impression on the Senior Class by his criticisms of their compositions, or so-called "dissertations," and his arguments given as decisions to sections (usually of eight persons) after their weekly disputes before him, which were long regarded as among the most essential and valuable parts of the College training. One of his pupils afterwards published his stenographic report of some of these decisions, which became a popular *vade mecum* for debaters in subsequent College generations. The topics considered are by no means even now out of date, nor have the most of Dr. Dwight's reasonings lost their power. He also met the entire Senior Class five days in the week throughout the year, for a recitation and lecture of two hours in either Logic, Rhetoric, Moral Philosophy, or Divinity; and his pupils were constantly impressed by his marked literary and oratorical skill, his keen sense of natural beauty, and his discriminating observance and criticism of differing types of human nature.

The custom of disputes in small sections before a College officer, who afterwards gave judgment on the questions debated, prevailed also in the Junior Class; as an instance of this a diary of a member of the Class of 1803 exhibits Tutor (afterwards Professor) Silliman in his exercise of that role. He had just been admitted to the New Haven bar, and was not unwilling to appear as an ardent politician. Thus the question, "Ought Foreigners to be admitted to public office?" was decided in the negative by Mr. Silliman, who totally disapproved such admission. To support his decision "he instanced," says the diarist, "some of those characters who have lately been admitted to civil offices, such as Gallatin [the Swiss Secretary of the Treasury], McKean [Governor of Pennsylvania, of Irish parentage], Dallas [United States District Attorney, born in Jamaica], etc., whose conduct as civil officers of state ought to be execrated by every true American." Posterity has not confirmed the tutor's partisan judgment of 1801.

A month later the question, "Ought the Slaves of the United States to be Immediately Emancipated?" was decided by him in the negative; as was also the question, "Ought the President of the United States to turn out officers on account of their political principles?" the fact that Thomas Jefferson had just become President furnishes the clue to the last decision.

Another question resolved in the negative before the same class (as it was ten years later by President Dwight) was this, "Ought foreign emigration to be encouraged by the United States?"—the chief argument being that none but corrupted and scapegallows fellows would ever emigrate.

The question, "Are novels beneficial?" received a negative answer, as did the kindred one, "Are theatres beneficial?" under President Dwight.

A feature of student etiquette long since outgrown was the exaggerated and plainly factitious profession

of regard and veneration for individual members of the Faculty. As an instance I quote from a letter of another of the Class of 1803 to a classmate:

“When we come to bid adieu to our fond Tutors Marsh and Silliman, human nature has to struggle with a still greater load of misery. To bid them farewell is too much for my feeble frame to endure. Already does the tear of sympathy start in my eye while I write, and my hand is already agitated, nay my whole frame is convulsed and shocked to its centre at the painful idea of our parting. May you be enabled to bear up under these trying mortifications and recollect the affection which you have always seen conspicuous in the amiable and greatly beloved Silliman.”

In estimating such an outburst, it is fair to remember that down to 1829 each of the two alphabetical sections into which a class was divided at the beginning of the Freshman year was placed under a Tutor who conducted all the recitations, declamations, compositions and disputes of his section up to the close of the Junior year, provided he continued in office for that period; and this arrangement increased vastly his personal influence. We should also remember, what we have doubtless all noticed who are familiar with such literature, that many of the letters exchanged by college youths of those days were of the nature of exercises in polite composition, and not the simple expression of natural feeling. In a similar fashion, most of the contributions to the literary periodicals which began to flourish at Yale during Dr. Dwight's presidency are not at all concerned with the occurrences of student life, and add nothing to our knowledge of the real interests of the writers, but merely serve as more or less elegant exercises in composition and rhetoric.

To recur to relations with the Faculty:—the custom which had come down from an early period of giving valuable presents to College officers when passing from under their instruction, still prevailed. This finally proved in operation so burdensome, as well as

invidious, that it was broken up by a law of the Faculty about 1840. A specimen of the language thought suitable for such communications may be seen in this extract from a letter sent by a part of the Class of 1802 to Tutor Jeremiah Day, when at the age of twenty-eight, he was obliged to leave College by serious ill health, though he finally survived to the age of ninety-four.

“It having pleased Providence to dissolve, a little prematurely, the connection which to our great advantage has long existed between us, the first division of the Junior Class embrace this opportunity of tendering to you the tribute of their cordial respect and veneration. To those whose minds are not impervious to the sentiments of tenderness and feeling, the moment of separation from a beloved object is beyond expression distressful. Placed as we are in this situation, and about to take our leave of you, at least for a considerable time, we are overwhelmed with a flood of emotions which no language can express. . . .

“Suffer us, Sir, on this occasion to request your acceptance of the enclosed sum, as a testimony of our gratitude and affection. . . .”

The amount and character of required study at that day were to our notions painfully inadequate. Pike's Arithmetic, introduced under President Stiles, was still a textbook for Sophomores or Freshmen; and both Juniors and Sophomores exercised their budding wits on Guthrie's Geography, the author of which died as long before as 1770. There were three regular daily recitations, but public declamations in the Chapel by representatives of each of the four classes before the full student body, were substituted on Saturday or Wednesday afternoons. Some option in subjects of study was allowed in the upper years; thus, in 1801, the Juniors decided by vote against the introduction of the study of Xenophon for two hours a week, and in 1805 the corresponding class voted down a proposition to study Spherical Geometry, but those who desired were allowed to substitute it for Homer.

Occasional holidays were not uncommon. State

Thanksgivings and Fasts were observed with two full Chapel services as on Sundays. Sometimes, but rarely, the two upper classes, who enjoyed in general a good deal of extra freedom, were excused from all but one recitation or lecture on Christmas Day. Similar latitude was granted on Election Day, a special annual occasion of popular festivity, when the election of State officials was held in the Middle Brick meetinghouse, and droves of country folk flocked into town to patronize the booths which lined the borders of the Green. I note also that to attend a trial at the Court House of special interest an entire class was sometimes excused from recitations; and in one instance apparently all the College afternoon exercises were omitted for a like reason.

It should also be mentioned that in Dr. Dwight's time, as in the earlier days, there was extreme laxity in enforcing the continuous residence of the students. For various reasons, especially in connection with the need of earning money, long absences were frequent, in addition to those resulting from illness and those required in the course of discipline.

The obligation of attendance on daily recitations, which was originally by law avoidable by paying a petty fine, seems also to have been taken very lightly. For example, here is a partial record of the first four days of junior year, from the diary of a member of the Class of 1803:

"Oct. 21. Arrived at N. Haven about noon . . . Prayers this evening, but I did not attend on account of my business.

"Oct. 22. Being employed in moving my furniture, I did not attend the college exercises, except prayers at evening.

"Oct. 23. Attended prayers and recitation in the morning, when I recited Tully de Oratore for the first time; recited the same at noon likewise. In the afternoon being anxious to attend the [General] Assembly, I omitted recitation. Attended prayers at evening.

"Oct. 24. Attended prayers and recitation in the morning. Attended the Assembly in the forenoon and omitted a recitation in Greek . . . Evening attended prayers."

Again, Sunday,

"Dec. 27. Absent from meeting with leave. Wrote a dispute and read 15 chapters in the bible.

"Dec. 28. Absent from recitations and prayers in the morning on account of writing a letter. ."

Another diarist gives a detailed statement of a few days in his Senior year, 1806, in substance as follows:

"Sunday, March 30. Rose at 5.45. Walked till prayers. Breakfast at 8. Read Bible, 8.30 to 10.30. Chapel service, 10.30 to 12. Walked till dinner, at 12.30. Walked till 1.30. Read Job to 2. Chapel, 2 to 4. Read Speech by Randolph to 5.20. Prayers. Tea. Walked till 7. Read chapter in Job. Visits & visitors to 9. Read, 9 to 9.30. Wrote diary. Retired.

"Monday, March 31. Rose at 5.30. Walked till prayers. Walked again. Read Greek Testament, 7 to 8 [instead of recitation?] Breakfast 8 to 8.30. Read, 8.30 to 9. Disputes, 9 to 10. Read New Testament, 10 to 11. Disputes 11-12.30. Walked. Dinner. Read in Horace's Satires, 2.20 to 4. Walked and read Greek grammar, 4 to 4.45. Prayers. Supper. Cut capers till 9. Read in Job, 9 to 10. Retired.

"Tuesday, April 1. Rose at 6. Dressed. shaved, walked, breakfast, &c., to 8.30. Read, 8.30 to 9. Lecture on meteors, 9 to 10. Read, 10 to 11. Recited Locke, walked, & dined, till 1.30. Read in Testament & Horace, &c., to 4.30. Prayers, Supper. Read Horace, 7.20 to 7.45. Visitors till 10.30.

"Wednesday, April 2. Rose before 6. Walked, prayers, &c., to 7. Read Testament, 7 to 8. Breakfast. Read Testament, 8.30 to 9. Disputes, 9 to 10. Read Horace, 10 to 11. Disputes, 11 to 12.30. Did nothing till dinner. Read Horace, 1.40 to 3. Barber, errands, &c., 3 to 4.30. Prayers. Supper. Post Office. Read Job, 7.30 to 8.30. Walked, 8.30 to 9.25.

"Thursday, April 3. Rose at 6. Prayers, Walked. Breakfast. Post Office. Read Locke, 8.30 to 9. Lecture on Philosophy, 9 to 10. Read Locke, 10 to 11. Recitation. Errands. Dinner. Making accounts & reading, 1.30 to 4. Walked. Prayers. Tea. Visiting & visitors to 9. Read Psalms, 9 to 10."

This extract may suffice, though the diarist continues his record for an entire week, his object being to see how much time he spends in study; and he concludes that his average is three and three-quarters hours a day.

Another bit of testimony, given a few months later by Samuel F. B. Morse, then a Freshman, in a letter to his parents, was intended to prove that his time was entirely taken up with study. He says:

"In the morning I must rise at five o'clock to attend prayers, and (immediately after) recitation; then I must breakfast, and begin to study from eight o'clock till eleven; then recite my forenoon's lesson, which takes me an hour. At twelve I must study French till one, which is dinner-time. Directly after dinner I must recite French (of course an extra study) to Monsieur Value till two o'clock, then begin to study my afternoon's lesson and recite it at five. Immediately after recitation I must study another French lesson to recite at seven in the evening; come home at nine o'clock and study my morning's lesson until ten, eleven, and sometimes twelve o'clock, and by that time I am prepared to sleep."

In accordance with the spirit of the age, as well as from his own controlling purpose, there was under Dr. Dwight a decided broadening of the range of studies. This was evident most notably in the addition under Professor Silliman of chemistry, geology, and mineralogy, and also in greater attention to mathematics and natural philosophy (or physics), and in the gradual introduction of systematic training in metaphysics, political science, rhetoric, and modern languages.

As has already been shown, the time was not wholly devoted to study (or "reading," so called); and prominent among other agencies for training in the development of power in composition and debate were the weekly meetings of the two open societies, Linonia and the Brothers in Unity, between which the whole body of students was divided. Smaller groups found their special affinities in the Phi Beta Kappa, restricted to the best scholars, and a continually shifting number of other fraternities, social, literary, musical, and religious.

There were daily amusements, also, of all sorts, lawful and unlawful. Dancing, card-playing, wine-

drinking, and attendance at or participation in dramatic performances were forbidden by the college laws; but none the less, whether by exceptional allowance or at risk of discipline, a good deal of such indulgence went on. The great social event of the year was the Commencement Ball, and next to that a Ball in connection with the Junior Exhibition, for both of which events engraved cards of invitation were formally sent out, an otherwise undreamed of bit of extravagance.

Dramatic pieces, under the modest name of "Colloquies," which is still retained, like the contemporary name of "Disputes," as a distinctive title on the College Scheme of Honors, were recited at the quarterly exhibitions of the upper classes, and more full-blown plays were also regularly given at the occasional semi-public celebrations held by the various societies, where fleeting reputations by amateur actors were enjoyed then as now. Our friends the diarists make it evident that cards and backgammon absorbed a good deal of time; and we may be surprised to find how much wine-drinking went on in College rooms. Here is a fair sample, taken from the journal kept by Benjamin Silliman, one of the most decorous of youths, in November of his Senior year:

"In the beginning of the evening I went with a member of my class to look at the planet Jupiter through the large telescope from the Museum, which with his four moons is very easily discovered. I returned from the Museum, and had a call to go to Bacon's room, to help despatch some wine; which I very readily obeyed, and I presume acted my part faithfully. I then returned to my own room, where I found Lynde; and soon after Bishop came in, and soon after him Strong. We drank a few glasses of wine, and had some sprightly conversation, &c. They all returned about nine."

With this compare also a letter quoted in the recent life of Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, addressed by him to his parents in the first term of Freshman year, when he was about fourteen and one-half years

old, asking for a special sum of money to equip his room properly with brandy, wine, and cigars; naturally the Rev. Dr. Morse objected decidedly to this item in his son's expenses. But nothing of the sort need surprise us in the days when a Faculty punch-bowl was part of the regular furniture of the President's office, and when such a souvenir of undergraduate life is still extant as a portly bottle of rum, with the legend "Class of 1802" molten into the glass on one side.

The subject of college expenses is illustrated by the account-books of various students. The main items, fixed by law and paid into the College Treasury, covered tuition; rent, and sweeping in dormitories and recitation-rooms; board in commons, with the steward's salary; and from time to time what were called "contingencies," including, for instance, such charges as assessments for cleaning up the College yard in the Spring, or for printing catalogues and monitors' bills, or for the employment of what we should call a detective, under the more definite name of "thief-catcher," or for the equipment of an "asylum" or infirmary.

The regular charges were about doubled under the Dwight administration,—tuition rising from sixteen to thirty-three dollars a year, and room rent from \$3.33 a quarter in the Old College, or \$5.33 in the New, to a uniform rate of \$7.32.

In comparison with the modern scale of prices such figures seem modest enough; and one further example may suffice. Daniel Mulford entered as a Junior after the year had opened in 1804, and secured a room with one of the class, who had intended to live alone, but took him in, and charged him, as Mulford's Diary records, twelve and one-half cents a week.

There were also voluntary contributions collected by subscription for such purposes as fireworks and extra music at Commencement (in one early instance amounting to over £50), for curtains for shading the

chapel windows, and for various class objects. At the same time there was a continual and honest effort on the part of the authorities to keep down extravagant expenditure at Commencement, as on all other public or semi-public occasions.

The amount ordinarily expended by an undergraduate who practiced economy was very moderate.

In 1803 Professor Silliman writes to an inquirer that:

"The necessary expenses, exclusive of clothing, traveling expenses in vacation, and pocket-money do not exceed \$200 per annum. A New-England youth often lives within \$250, including *all* his expenses, and few of them exceed \$300; but I am disposed to think none of the Southern young gentlemen spend less than \$400, and some of them much more. The Southern youth ought not to spend more than \$400. This is sufficient for every purpose of ease, utility, or dignity; they will necessarily spend somewhat more than the Northern youth as being insulated from their friends & remote from their Country."

At his entrance upon office Dr. Dwight urgently favored a more democratic organization of the College community than had been the custom. In particular, he proposed that the duty of Freshmen to go on errands for upper classmen, and the prerogative of Seniors to inspect and regulate the manners and morals of Freshmen, be abrogated. An earnest protest against such a sweeping subversion of ancient privilege, signed by the Professor and Tutors, is still extant, which advocates the retention of the rule of subordination, since "Freshmen being a great part of them rude, from rude towns and families, and set at once free from parental restraint, ever will assume a haughtiness and importance, and learn vices, which the few instructors of a college can never properly moderate and suppress." The President prevailed to the extent that the right of sending Freshmen on errands was taken away from Sophomores, and that Seniors lost the right of supervising and disciplining Freshmen. At the same time was swept away the time-honored regulation that no Freshman might

wear a hat on college grounds within ten rods of the the President, within eight rods of a Professor, or within six rods of a Tutor.

The old exactions of petty fines for absence (two cents) and for tardiness (one cent) at Chapel services and at recitations were left on the books, though perhaps not thoroughly enforced; as also the like penalty for the absence of a student from his room during study hours, recreation being confined to half an hour after breakfast, an hour and a half after dinner, and from prayers to 9 o'clock in the evening.

Of similar strictness were the provisions for Sunday observance by the students, which included not only morning and evening prayers and forenoon and afternoon worship (an order which remained in full force until 1859), but also a prohibition of their profaning the day, among other things, by walking abroad, or by unnecessary absence from their rooms on Sundays, or on Saturday evenings, when the Sabbath began, or by admitting to their rooms other students or strangers,—provisions which were certainly not obsolete, though with equal certainty constantly violated; as was also the prohibition of walking or driving more than two miles from the College, even on a week-day, without leave of one of the officers.

Remembering the large part that outdoor sports play in the life of the modern collegian, it is surprising that the echoes of the past bring so little that bears distinctly on the corresponding activities of the students of those distant generations. A print of Yale College in 1807, the work of a well-known New Haven engraver, Amos Doolittle, shows in the foreground a game of football on the Public Green, played by students wearing tall hats, swallow-tail coats, and knee-breeches, with President Dwight himself occupying the sidewalk, in the full majesty of broad-brimmed beaver and academic gown.

In Dr. Stiles's day the use of caps and gowns by undergraduates had been encouraged; but as from

economical motives the gowns seem to have been made of calico, they can hardly have been effective in detail or at close range.

Besides football there are also traces of wicket, a popular outdoor game in Connecticut, as a favorite student recreation; while sailing on the harbor and swimming from the nearby shores are shown to have been common by monitory provisions in the College statutes.

At intervals the formation of companies for military drill and naval practice among the students was a favorite pastime; but however natural the expressions of patriotic sentiment, the practice was not without risk of abuse. Witness, for instance, the celebration on July 4, 1801, when a barrel of wine was mounted on a table at dinner in the Hall, and no one was expected to leave until the barrel had been emptied.

My object is attained, if I leave my story here, with this fleeting glimpse at the conditions of life in a typical New England College, of the generation which furnished the educated men who still lingered on the stage when the oldest of us were young.

This particular group of Yale students was not highly distinguished, either in capacities or achievements. The names of Benjamin Silliman, Lyman Beecher, John C. Calhoun, Fenimore Cooper, S. F. B. Morse, and James G. Percival, are perhaps as well-known today as any half-dozen of the number; but viewing them comprehensively the record of President Dwight's eleven or twelve hundred pupils for wide and honorable if not brilliant usefulness is one with which any master of men might justly be content.

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.