

Comment by the Editor

SOCIAL CONTRASTS

They were sitting in the Iowa Union — the maid of '29 and the man of '92. Over the broad space of the colorful lounge dwelt an air of calm repose, accentuated by the mellow light of late afternoon and the strains of soft radio music which pervaded the room like faint perfume. It was a time and place for revery, and the girl was sympathetic.

What a contrast to the literary society rooms of Old South Hall and the Armory on College Street, mused the man of a former epoch. But the ugly beams and rough brick walls of the Armory could be camouflaged with lattice and hundreds of hand-made paper chrysanthemums. The heavy window draperies of Zetagathian hall and the Irving canopy were grand enough for a generation that found amusement in conversation and debating.

Were students then too proud to dance, and what of bridge? inquired the modern maid.

To be sure, there was dancing, and a few played cards, but cinch was a dreadful bore and the dances were rather too decorous for plebeian tastes. Every couple walked the gauntlet of the long reception line, and at two or dawn when the party was over they bade adieu in the same respectful manner.

What a sad ending after the pleasure of dancing till daylight, sighed the girl.

Ah, the gay nineties were really Victorian. A boy's right arm goes farther now; but then his reach did not exceed his grasp. To the girls of the T. W. V. no man who smoked on the campus need apply for a social engagement. Though hilarious picnics and unceremonious sociables were common, intellectual festivities were equally popular. A banquet was considered incomplete without a feast of eight or nine toasts.

How terribly dry, murmured the sprightly miss.

On the contrary, replied her companion, wit was cultivated as an art, and cleverness became the creed of social devotees. Any member of a "conversation circle" could discuss the relation of the price of potatoes to the McKinley Bill in an interesting way. Would you have kept this impromptu valentine if you were the Pi Phi girl to whom it was addressed?

A spotted dress,
A raven tress,
Complexion light I trow.
Her eyes, I think,
Are black as ink,
But really I don't know.

That would depend on the author, she said.

J. E. B.