

# St. John's Collegian

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## College Meeting

Those who are worried by the ever present demands of the Selective Service and are in constant fear of finding a long white envelope in their mail-boxes were offered some solace by the Dean, who reported a few cases of deferment until early summer. It seems that this is a recent change in the fluctuating and undependable policy of local draft boards. Why such a change has occurred, and for how long the deferments will continue is unknown. In any case, the Dean offered his services to those who wish to make a formal application for deferment through him. This consists of recording such vital statistics as your scholastic standing and year of graduation. He also reminded those concerned to keep the Registrar or the Assistant Dean posted on any developments in standing with local draft boards.

The remainder of the meeting was given over to an exposition of the ends of the mathematics tutorial at St. John's. Modern analytic mathematics, said Mr. Buchanan, is superficial in a way that is at once valuable and dangerous. Valuable because, like the superficiality of Shakespeare, it comprehends the surface which it treats, and dangerous because, though in some way complete, it is also shallow and inelastic. The facile intelligibility that it presents stretches itself over a void. That void can be bodied forth in part by an understanding of geometry and arithmetic, and the teaching of mathematics at this college should be oriented toward that end. Mathematics may be understood in terms of the trivial arts; it has its grammar, rhetoric and logic. The syntax of mathematics is reducible to the four fundamental operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, and these operations, imposed by the imagination upon numbers or magnitudes, which are the parts of speech of the science, constitute the whole of what is called doing mathematics.

It must be understood rhetorically also, in the tutorials as well as in the laboratory. When it becomes a subject matter in itself, referring to nothing beyond itself, it is sterile. Mathematics measures the world; for Leibniz and Descartes it invented the world.

In its logical aspect, mathematics may be studied formally in two senses. In one way,  $x$  plus  $y$  equals  $z$  and  $x$  equals  $z$  minus  $y$  are two "forms" of a single equation, but these transformations are ordered to a higher form. And a function, similarly, moving from form to form as the variable changes, changes within a form. It was with the discovery of such primary forms that the ancient astronomers were concerned. Numbers, like the heavenly bodies, are governed in their diverse motions. And towards the sources of this government the tutorials should direct their inquiry.

B. J., R. A.

## Dance

"The Lord God caused a deep sleep to all upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

And it may be imagined that some of the wiser beasts in the Garden smacked their lips and winked at each other from among the elder bushes. For it has been said that a woman never forgets her sex, that she would rather talk with a man than an angel, any day; and indeed the very nature of young girls demands that sooner or later they set out in pursuit of pleasurable ends. The fortunate thing is that the constitution of boys is in this respect similar to that of girls, and so cleverly does this work out, if we may joust with the banal, that only those of us who are seriously ugly need go without some sort of satisfaction.

The dance, to be held in the gymnasium tomorrow night is an enterprise

devoted to the enjoyable communion of the sexes, and there are surely no more than a handful who object. For woman has been aptly called the weaker vessel, and this leaves us with all manner of high hopes. Because of her fallibility, indeed, she can be led into all kinds of situations which are, if nothing else, the occasion for hearty laughter. Nothing has so much occupied the comic as well as the tragic poets as has the couch of lovers, and the composers of masques and festival pantomimes depend almost entirely on hey-diddle-diddle for their various displays. So you may draw what you like (and your opportunity knocks once again tomorrow night at the Valentine Vagary) from the merry rendezvous of Jack and Jill. For those of you who hold in contempt the more thorough pastimes, Jill will perform, as only she can, the tarentella or the minuet. She will hold your hand, if you care for that, and she can be made to sing like a bird.

There will be a shipment of girls, to arrive late tomorrow afternoon to be unpacked in the course of the evening, a cargo of those same little creatures which we have described above. Most of them will be from nearby seminaries where the poor things are kept, like fowls in a coop, for most of a long year. So they will naturally be frisky and ready to go; in truth the female, far more so than the man, is impatient of confinement and needs, like the dog, walking.

Let us conclude with a stanza from the work of Walt Whitman, that glorious old man.

"Sex contains all, bodies, souls, Meanings, proofs, purities, delicacies, results, promulgations, All hopes, benefactions, bestowals, all the passions, loves, beauties, delights of the earth.

All the governments, judges, gods."

The dance will be exceedingly informal; and though the nude is barred, anything else will do, from bathing suits to barrels.



## War Meeting

Under the title "The War Today", Mr. Klein last Sunday reviewed the war yesterday and speculated on the war to-morrow. Taking up where he left off last year, he said that December 7 was not a very important date, inasmuch as it had no immediate effect on the course of the war, except to prompt Germany to develop her submarine industry at the expense of her airpower. The fall of Singapore on February 15, on the other hand, will go down into history as the day on which Asia became conscious of the end of the white man's empire. Leaving Japan preparing for a long war after her initial conquests, Mr. Klein then turned to the European theatre, where the Russians had been making one big mistake until the beginning of the second German offensive on June 28. They had been trying to resist the invader by all means, which resulted in tremendous losses and brought them and us closer to defeat than we ever realized. On the whole we were also unaware of the great danger of our position if the Germans had attempted to carry out the much-talked about pincers movement in the Middle East. With the superior airpower which they had at their disposal in that region, they might have succeeded in joining forces with Japan through Persia and India. Their third strategic possibility was North Africa, and it was mainly the policy of our State Department towards Vichy that prevented them from seizing it. When they finally decided to take a last chance on knocking Russia out of the war, they were confronted with a new strategy: The Russians retreated steadily and slowly. The Germans had no definite plan. They would have broken through wherever there was a chance; but the Russians distributed their forces so as to slow down their advance just enough to prevent them from reaching either of their main objectives in time. The Nazis never conquered Baku, or Stalingrad, or Moscow, and the great, the real battle of Stalingrad was won by the Soviets in October, when the Germans got to the suburbs of the city, but no further.

In the meantime the British had been pouring everything at their disposal into Egypt and the air and land offensive there was followed closely by Rommel's defeat, the occupation of North Africa and the start of the Russian drive. Thus the turning point of the war falls between the last week of October and the last week of November, not because the events of those days insured the defeat of Germany, but because they reversed the positions of the belligerents. Nazi-occupied Europe, which had until then been a mighty arsenal besieging the small fortress that was England, became a fortress besieged from all sides by an even mightier arsenal in the hands of the Allies. However, the Germans today would probably be in a position to march through Spain and Spanish Morocco and turn the picture around again by driving the British and Americans out of North Africa, if it wasn't for their eastern front. And the question of holding the Russian line is a political one, for it is conceivable that if they retreated to their own border, the Russians would stop there. But maintaining that line would require a tremendous air force, and they can have it, if we don't move soon, from North Africa, from Egypt, from England, or in Norway, or at all points at once. And we will have to move, for this reason: If Russia alone is going to win the decisive victories of the war, England and America will emerge from it as second-rate powers. On the other hand a clash in some form or other is unavoidable between the Russians and the Anglo-Saxons in post-war Europe, because neither believe in the others' policy.

How good are our chances when it occurs? Mr. Klein leaves us with this thought: today the crust of civilization has fallen off Europe. Her people, including the Russians and the English, are left with their bare suffering bodies and hearts. They know what power is, but they do not know reason; whereas those very Americans who are today shaping in their imagination the future of Europe, know so much of one and so little of the other that even when they think of power, they think of it in terms of reason.

## Arts

"Clinch, melody, hurry, special, dumb, cake, forrester. cane, carpet, incline, spread, light, labor."

At popular prices, all America see *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. This is the picturization of the life of fabulous George M. Cohan. Its star is the most objectional person in films, James Cagney. That's too bad, too, because we shared everyone's affection for Mr. Cohan. Among the records we like to think we're always going to keep is the score from *I'd Rather Be Right*. Cohan next to last stage vehicle. Richard Whorf plays Cohan's partner, Sam Harris. At the Capitol on Sunday and later at the Circle.

Preston Sturges' *Palm Beach Story* can be seen almost everyday next week at either the Circle, starting Sunday, or the Capital later, so there is no reason for missing it. Usually with this sort of *gay, mad* stuff we never feel that it's actually funny. *Palm Beach Story* is an exception in many respects and in this one too, for it is quite as amusing as the ads say. Claudette Colbert is a wife who decides to look for a millionaire, and takes a train ride with the Ale and Queen Club. But that isn't all. This ran very favorably with Miss Colbert's *Happened One Night*.

We are raising a fund, by gathering pennies from our best friends, to give a complete set of Edgar Guest to whomever thought up the title *Reveille for Beverly*. People ask us, "What about the Republic, Sunday?" and when we say *Reveille for Beverly*, they just don't believe us. Starred are Bob Crosby and Freddie Slack, whoever they may be. We do not encourage this sort of thing.

On Wednesday and Thursday next week, there is a picture called *The Avengers* on at the Capitol. Candidly we don't know anything about it except that its stars are Ralph Richardson and Deborah Kerr. From this we deduce that its greatest merit will be Mr. Richardson's performance. Something about Norway and the Nazis, believe.