

▶▶ The Spotlight on Sports ◀◀



▶▶ Teapot Tempest

ALWAYS obliging, the Columbia *Spectator* has let fly a broadside against college football. Editor Reed Harris called it "a semi-professional racket," implying that the Columbia players are being paid on a piecework basis.

Reaction was instantaneous. Old grads, those perennial sophomores, demanded that Harris be drawn and quartered. "Harris is too serious—he should be more collegiate," said a faculty advisor on athletics.

"I'm glad to know that I've been hiring a gang of semi-pros," said Coach Lou Little. "I never would have suspected it from watching the team play football." Nicholas Murray Butler, for once, said nothing.

The accused Columbia players wanted to say it with punches. Captain Ralph Hewitt and Center Rush Bill McDuffee invaded Harris's literary sanctum and threatened to knock his block off.

"You weigh 200 pounds," shouted Hewitt, pointing a finger at the husky, bespectacled editor, "but after trying for the freshman team you quit, you didn't have the nerve to face the varsity."

"Go ahead and punch me," retorted Harris, glaring at the stocky 167-pound Columbia quarterback. "I gave up football on the advice of my doctor because of a weak heart."

"That was a swell diagnosis," interjected the truculent McDuffee. "You'll either retract tomorrow or we'll beat you up!"

Harris refused to be intimidated. He published a follow-up editorial the next day, piling fuel on the flames, but the beating never came off. Just when everybody was set for a fist fight, the football players were muzzled and handcuffed by an Athletic Association edict.

Replying to the charge of football commercialization, Coach Little suggested that it would be well to examine the books of *The Spectator*, adding—"College publications are honeycombed with graft."

Harris thereupon offered free access

to *The Spectator's* business accounts and made a counter demand to examine the football books. That was a telling thrust, apparently, for the Athletic Association heads called his request "an unwarranted impertinence." They refused to let Harris inspect the football association's financial ledgers.

Minority opinion on the campus, reflecting the views of the so-called intelligentsia, supported Harris's stand and raised the time-honored "freedom of the press" issue. Whatever one's personal views about this teapot tempest, one must applaud Harris's courage. His editorial is but another indication of the skeptical attitude toward football that at this time is sweeping the undergraduate bodies here in the East.

▶▶ Annual Classic

HARVARD FACES YALE tomorrow in America's counterpart of the Oxford-Cambridge Rugby match. It is the social highlight of the football year, admitting that Notre Dame could beat both the Johnnies and the Elis on the same afternoon.

Not that Harvard or Yale hasn't a good team, but that Notre Dame, as usual, is represented by a super-squad. The star of football empire has taken its way westward and is now located at South Bend, Indiana, close to the mythical center of population.

Yale has been hibernating since the freak 33-33 "track meet" with Dartmouth. Little St. John's College from Annapolis provided the "opposition," such as it was, on November 7. Last Saturday was an open date at New Haven. Thus the Elis have had what amounts to a three-week layoff preceding the Harvard match.

True, its massacre of St. Johns had an unfortunate aftermath. Albie Booth bruised a muscle in one of his million-dollar legs, a catastrophe reflected in daily bulletins from the Yale medical office. Commuters have let their coffee grow cold as they turned the sport pages to discover whether Yale's mighty atom had tossed away his crutches.

Albie Booth isn't brittle, but after weathering major games unharmed he has twice pulled a ligament in a minor warm-up match prior to the Harvard battle. Back in 1929 he rode a "Charley horse" onto Soldiers Field, but dismounted in time to give Harvard partisans that all-gone feeling. Albie was off to a touchdown when a Harvard man grabbed him from behind by the slack of his jersey neck. That game was featured by Booth's ceremonious unveiling. Rushed onto the field to drop-kick, he stood in the middle of the arena peeling off mackinaws, trench coats and sweaters, a performance that smacked of the time-honored disrobing act on the burlesque stage.

This little game of strip poker was intended to impress Harvard, but it proved a psychological boomerang. The Johnnies blocked Albie's kick and marched 80 yards to the winning touchdown.

Booth has been hobbled by a Harvard hoodoo. In freshman year, Albie's team was beaten by Barry Wood's Crimson cubs. That set a precedent which has held good in varsity competition. Harvard men regard Booth with a patronizing "there, there, little boy," attitude which is exceedingly galling to Eli pride. Taught to grab Albie around the neck rather than dive at his phantom feet, Harvard's players have never allowed Booth to give his imitation of a spook on a spree. Tomorrow, however, Ben Ticknor will not be out there throttling Albie at every turn. The Blue Minnow may find a needle-eye opening. That's all he needs.

▶▶ Ancient Ruse

SCOUTS assigned to Ithaca claim that the weights listed in the Cornell program are doctored to deceive opponents. The discrepancy per man is said to average ten pounds. Certainly, those husky Cornell linemen don't look as light as the crafty Professor Dobie would have you believe.

No man by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature, but those Yale midgets of the printed page certainly seemed to grow taller and broader as you gazed. They filled the eye, and it wasn't an optical illusion either. As one Harvard cynic remarked: "They must serve a man-sized meal at the Yale training table between weighing in and game time."

GEORGE TREVOR.

Music

⇒ *Schwanda*

AT LAST Mr. Gatti-Casazza has given us an operatic novelty worthy in every respect of a place in the Metropolitan Opera House repertoire. This opera may justly be called an established success abroad, since in its brief existence it has attained about two thousand performances in European opera houses. The music, by the Bohemian composer, Jaromir Weinberger, is set to a text by Milos Kares, based on a Czech version of an old fairy tale common to several kindred races, dealing with a marvelous musician who had the gift of making all dance to his piping. In the opera he performs this feat even in the infernal regions, the wild dance being led by the Old Boy himself—the latter, incidentally, being so genial and humorous a devil as to damage many current conceptions as to the ultimate advantages of good behavior in this more or less sinful world.

The dexterously written libretto has a light humor which is peculiarly refreshing in these days, when so many operatic jobbers treat of the "machine age" with an awful seriousness. The music is unreservedly the best of its type that the writer has heard in many years. Fresh, spontaneous, melodic invention and interesting rhythms are everywhere in evidence. Mr. Weinberger makes delightful use of the humorous fugue in two instances—the piquantly flavored overture, which no hearer should miss, and the scene in which *Schwanda* plays before Satan and his amiable imps—here, the fugal theme as a rhythm approximates a hornpipe. Chorus and orchestra participate in a manner nothing short of masterly. The instrumentation is colorful and discreet and is never allowed to obscure the text. The cast was competent and reached high excellence in the case of Friedrich Schorr as *Schwanda*. Maria Mueller was very good as *Schwanda's* wife. Other rôles were competently sung by Karin Branzwell, Gustav Schuetzen-dorf and Marek Windheim. Rudolph Laubenthal was better histrionically than vocally.

Mr. Bodanzky, evidently finding the score congenial, conducted with obvious gusto and handled the difficult contrapuntal passages with an admirable clarity; he infused into his reading a zest and color which contributed to an excellent performance well deserved by an equally excellent score. In the writer's judgment *Schwanda* has the elements of a lasting vogue. MARSHALL KERNOCHAN.

⇒ The Week in Business ⇐

⇒ *Thrown for a Loss*

LAST week was not so good. Business got off to a fine stride on Monday, but the middle of the week saw a slowing up of the advance in commodity prices. Wheat and cotton closed the six-day period with losses and the security markets were quick to reflect the unfavorable trend.

There were, however, a few encouraging factors. Steel production made a gain of 1 per cent. Federal Reserve currency figures registered another decline, and silver futures ended the week with a net gain, in spite of a midweek slump.

To a certain extent the week's hesitancy may be charged to uncertainty over the outcome of important conferences affecting two great industries—copper and the rails. The copper producers were struggling with the difficult problem of world stabilization, and representatives of the carriers discussing means of conforming with the Interstate Commerce Commission's rate increase proposal. If either of these conferences had produced clear-cut results, entries in the week's business log might have been much more cheerful than they were.

As for the security markets, by no means all of the competent observers are

depressed by the temporary setback in price levels. Some of them are avowedly pleased, their conviction being that the upward movement had been a little too rapid for the general good. As a matter of fact, the reaction was not of major proportions, and a new spurt in commodity prices or definite progress reported by copper or the rails might easily give the investment curve another upward turn.

⇒ *Embattled Amusements*

POSSIBILITY of a receivership for Radio-Keith-Orpheum Corporation has swung the spotlight in the direction of all amusement enterprises. The fight which resulted in turning the Fox interests over to banking control was described on this page some months ago. Since then the Shubert Theatre Corporation, the largest operator of legitimate theatres in the United States, has been thrown into equity receivership and A. H. Woods, another big producer, has filed a petition in bankruptcy.

Earnings of most of the amusement vendors have fallen off badly during the past two years. For example, Fox Film earned only \$120,152 during the first six months of 1931, against \$6,785,897 in the corresponding period of 1930.

Receivership for R-K-O is by no means a certainty, but its vice-president in charge of legal affairs, B. B. Kahane, says that it will surely follow if the Class A stockholders oppose the present plan of reorganization, which carries a \$5 assessment on each share of Class A stock. Joseph Kennedy and Pat Powers are leading a strong opposition. The fight is on, and the Class A stockholders are paying for ringside seats.

FRANK A. FALL.

INDICES

(A two-minute summary)

COMMODITY PRICES (Fisher's Index—1926=100) November 12—68.5. (Crump's British Index—1926=100) November 12—67.4.

CAR LOADINGS (American Railway Assn.) Week ended October 31—740,363 cars (reduction of 29,310 under preceding week and of 194,352 under same week of 1930).

STEEL INGOT PRODUCTION Week ended November 7—31% of capacity (increase of 1% over preceding week; reduction of 12% under same week of 1930).

CRUDE OIL PRODUCTION Week ended November 7—daily average gross 2,456,800 barrels (increase of 25,550 over preceding week and of 159,550 over same week of 1930).

BANK CLEARINGS (as reported to Bradstreet's) Week ended November 12—\$5,498,038,000 (reduction of 8.6% under preceding week and of 38.6% under same week of 1930).

FAILURES (as reported to R. G. Dun & Co.) Week ended November 12—531 (increase of 16 over preceding week and of 36 over same week of 1930).

