

Helpful Hints on How to Waste Time

As the years roll by I grow increasingly conscious of a talent which I possess. Perhaps other people are aware of it too, but because I have devoted the last few years in trying to know myself and others a little better, it is hardly possible that they realize it quite as clearly as I do myself. I think some philosopher said that to "know thyself" was a good policy, but I am not sure whether you had better take the advice too seriously, because you might find out too much about yourself, become terrified at the result of the investigation and resort to the old-fashioned method of jumping over the wharf. That's not good policy,—well, I am getting away from my subject, but anyway what I mean to say is this, that I am really an expert at wasting time, and I think that the reading public should not be deprived of the few helpful hints that I can give them. Of course I have seen other people who seem to have the art down to a fairly creditable basis,—the majority of them specialize along different lines from those I follow,—but I received some good ideas from them.

Now as all good building whether it be of character or otherwise depends to a large degree on proper foundations, I have considerable advice to give to amateur time-wasters. If you want to become a first class failure and waste the better part if not all of your time don't bother planning on what you are going to do in later life. If your parents are anxious that their little Lester or Frankie or Joey will get a good start in life, they will very probably want to send you to college. Fine! There are many colleges where, as a student, you can waste more time than you could anywhere else, and several of these charge much money for the privilege of assisting you. No doubt you could waste ninety per cent of your time in some of them just keeping up with the social life and chumming around with rich men's sons. Maybe you would go to a co-educational institution, and you would get interested in some nit-wit classmate of the other sex. Then when all other means for wasting time would be exhausted, you could waste hours and hours thinking up sentimental love effusions to write to her.

At a high priced institution of this kind you might be surprised at all the time you could squander, whether

it be directly or indirectly. Perhaps your dad would have to work his fingers to the bone every day, in order to get money to pay your tuition, and your mother would try to economize on the grocery bill in order to send her darling some pocket money. Therefore by wasting all the time you could, you would no doubt fail in your exams., as well as lose the benefit of systematized study, and consequently help those parents to waste all the valuable time that they spent in slaving for you.

However if you are not in a position to attend one of the aforementioned types of college, there are others less expensive. I have one in mind at present where the rates are reasonable, but I warn you that every year it is becoming more and more difficult to waste your time there. However, if you make a real study of the problem, you can no doubt, waste much time, despite the watchful eyes of instructors who will use every means to defeat your purpose. At an institution of this kind you will take your place with the rest of the student body at the beginning of the year, and listen to the rules of the institution being read. If I were you I would try to skip that meeting altogether, or if you are forced to be present just make up your mind that you are not going to listen, that the man reading the rules is your worst enemy, and that the doctrines he is expounding are nothing short of tyranny. In reality, if you paid strict attention, you would discover that all the rules being read have as a purpose your own good as well as of your classmates, and if followed, might ultimately make men of you. But as I said before if your main purpose in life is to waste all the time you can just don't listen to them! Now for a word or two in regard to daily routine.

When a bell rings early in the morning to warn you that you have twenty minutes, no more and no less, in which you are expected to be awake, dressed, and all ready to attend religious exercises or go to breakfast, pay no attention to it, just stay between those glorious sheets until the last possible minute. By getting up promptly at the first bell you might get ambitious and do some odd jobs at which you could waste time later in the day. When you do finally move out of the room, arrange to be a few minutes late. Perhaps the other fellows will wait for you, and even if it were for only two minutes and there were one thousand students just think of all the time that would waste. A little mental calculation would

give you a result of two thousand minutes or thirty-three and a third hours of wasted time.

In hours of study be sure at least to have a book open before you. It will be a safeguard if one of the professors should drop in, but don't concentrate on it or you might catch the habit of studying. Try to have a few pictures hanging around your desk or on the wall in front of you; they will serve as a distraction. If you have exercises to do for class just forget about them; there's always some ambitious fellow in the class who will have them done, and you can copy them off his book in a few minutes. It's a good idea if you want to take your mind off your studies to go visiting a neighbor's room. At first perhaps, he will not feel inclined to waste his time talking to you, but persevere and he will finally come around. If you are not socially inclined, just take your book, lie down on your bed and if you are a normal, healthy individual in no time you will be asleep—result, a whole study period wasted!

When you go to class size up your instructor carefully; make an estimate of how much you can loaf without interference from him, then pay as little attention to him as possible. Try to get seated near a window where you can watch the doings of the outside world. It's really marvellous how interesting even trivial things will become when seen through a class-room window. I remember once of wasting fifty whole minutes watching the bursar dodging a commercial traveller. During recreation periods, take as little exercise as possible. All manly sports such as football, hockey and basketball tend to create ambition, increase the will power, and forestall hospital bills. Therefore, if in later life you want to waste half your time supporting the family doctor, by all means shun bodily exercise.

Now we will consider that you have reached the culmination of your time-wasting ability in college, and are looking for some place to loaf for the rest of your life. If you want to eat three square meals a day, drive in a car and, in short, "keep up to the Jones"; you won't be able to waste much of your own time, but by capitalizing on the failing of your fellow mortals to waste their time, you might even become wealthy. Here's a plan. People will waste more time reading a certain type of magazine than they will at anything else. Some Saturday night take a stroll into a bookstore and watch the pile of maga-

zines that seem most popular with the young men. Before they are all gone, buy one, and have a look at what is in it. You will find a few shady jokes, pictures which you would not look at in a public reading room, some questionable stories and some articles ranging from the life history of a world famous crooner to the ravings of a psychoanalyst. Any fool could publish a magazine like that, therefore you could and you would not lack for subscribers. Why young people, particularly college students, go just crazy over that type of publication. By this time I suppose you are wondering what magazine publishing has to do with my subject. Here is the secret, you would get anywhere from twenty to one hundred thousand subscribers and if you can estimate how much time would be lost by them in reading the magazine you are as much of a genius as the fellow who said he could figure out the number of molecules of water in the Atlantic Ocean.

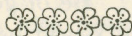
If you have not a flare for publishing, why not try to get into politics? Thousands of people would waste their time listening to you at campaign meetings, and if you would tell them often enough that prosperity is just around the corner, or that your election to office in some magic way would reduce the price of what they had to buy and create inexhaustible markets for what they wanted to sell, who knows but you might get elected. Then the whole country would co-operate in wasting their time raising taxes to pay your salary.

Oh yes, there are lots of ways to waste time, and I wish I had time to tell you more of them. Here's one for the ladies that I picked up when waiting in a lineup at a ticket office. Little Miss Callerwhatyoulike, after much pushing and complaining at last reached the wicket. Apparently she was not sure where she wanted to go, because it took her two minutes to decide whether she would go to one station or another one, and another minute to decide whether she would travel first or second class. When she came to pay for her ticket,—oh Heaven preserve the patience of ticket agents,—she started looking for her money in one of those mysterious handbags that women carry. During a frantic search for cash, she piled articles on that counter ranging from hairpins to an extra pair of shoes, and just five minutes after she had reached the wicket, found her money in her spectacle case. Now she was the direct cause of wasting five minutes of her

own time and five minutes of the ticket agent's time. She delayed that train three minutes which meant an equal amount of wasted time to every man, woman and child waiting at depot or post office along the line until freight would be unloaded, mail sorted or passengers arrive.

These are but hints, but I am sure that with perseverance and individual originality they could be developed into real time-wasting devices.

—R. C., '35.



Earnestness is enthusiasm tempered by reason.—
Pascal.

Unerring Nature still divinely bright,
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of art.

—*Pope.*

Now conscience wakes despair
That slumber'd, wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be.

—*Milton.*

