

**Alive ?**

Vaquero, '39

Mary McCarthy, the official ticket-seller, rubbed both eyes and looked again. Her expression was not unlike that of a mother who sees her six month-old baby suddenly climb out of his crib and walk gracefully across the floor. It was incredible !

Not that it was out of the way for professors to attend the Graduation Dance; they often did. Yet Dr. James O'Neil was not to be classed as an ordinary every-day professor. In referring to him students would shake their heads and with knowing smiles label him a "case."

Dr. O'Neil seemed to be a glaring exception to the universal statement that "man is a social animal." Since he had come to Remington University as head of the English Department his life had been a solitary one. His only interests outside the class room were ancient authors and the beauty of natural landscapes. Animal he may have been, but he certainly was not social.

As Dr. O'Neil watched the crowd wander into the dance hall he was thinking of his argument with Raymond, professor of psychology. The latter had maintained that people who were *really* alive showed this life by physical activity, v.g., by dancing. In short, Raymond had stolidly insisted that book-worms do not live, but only exist. Well, if his fellow professor were right he was due for a sort of re-birth, for he *would* dance. Idly he wondered what the musicians would play. Perhaps he would hear the "Merry Widow Waltz."

His reverie was suddenly broken by a cheery "Good evening, Dr. O'Neil." Turning he saw John Kelly, one of the students, with an attractive looking girl at his side.

"I want you to meet Mabel Brown, Doctor."

"Hi Doc," Mabel twittered with a wave of her hand.

"How do you do, Miss Brown," the Doctor replied with a courteous bow. "May I have the pleasure of the first figure with you ?"

"Consider yourself hooked for good, old primo, my friend," answered Miss Brown. "And ah—just call me Mabel, Doc," she added with a saucy smile.

The orchestra suddenly blared into the strains of the opening number and couples began to swing out on the polished floor. The professor was looking at the orchestra with a startled expression on his face. He became con-



scious of a tugging at his coat sleeve and turning, he saw Kelly nodding in Miss Brown's direction. She was swaying back and forth, snapping her fingers to the rhythm of the tune.

As he moved into the dance the good Doctor seriously doubted the wisdom of deciding the issue in this fashion. Miss Brown's head was nestling against his shoulder and she was singing softly in his ear:

"Black is white and white is black  
For no good reason that I know  
But just because my baby says it's so."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Doctor, "Those are not the words of an established song, are they?"

"Sure, cute aren't they?"

"Well, ah, perhaps, but the conclusion is a bit fantastic even if—ah—the baby says it's so."

Just then the orchestra stopped for a moment and, with a wild blare, swung into "Marjorie." Couples began to hop, and romp about the room at a dizzy pace. The professor found himself being pulled about at a very embarrassing rate. His steps, though he tried to keep them slow and measured, were anything but dignified. He felt much like a youngster who has been caught stealing the forbidden jam.

In the act of being spun around by Mabel he nearly collided with a couple next to him. Turning his head in their direction he said with a smile of apology: "I am terribly sorry. We nearly bumped into——." The good Doctor never finished his sentence, for he was struck from two quarters. He felt his body rise and the next moment he found himself seated on the floor. "Jove! This is—stupendous," he muttered as he gazed blankly at the floor.

Many hands lifted him to his feet while every one laughed heartily, including Mabel. With all the dignity he could muster he walked over to Miss Brown and asked to be excused from the rest of the dance. Then, with a polite bow he turned and hastened from the hall.

Back in his room at the college the professor eased himself into his best chair. After he had filled and lit his pipe he picked up a volume of Tennyson's poetry and opened it at random. He smiled wryly and searched for another cushion as he read the first passage which caught his eye:

Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes.