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THE SCRIBBLER

JANUARY, 1909

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THE BONEYARD

The space fondly christened the Boneyard,
In it's sinuous, sluggish way,
Slips stealthily on to some shallow pool
Through the long and level day.
Never a touch of sparkle,
And never a gleam of light;
No hint of the subtle or quick surprise;
No sense of power or might;
But the same old pointless, plodding course,
The same depressing drag,
Too stupid even to feel remorse
For its listless, loitering lag.

Oh, for the brook which tumbles or creeps
Through dancing sunlight or arching shade,
The brook which slumbers or nimbly leaps
In grave or frolicksome masquerade;
Now like a sprite, so fleet and gay,
Now like a dream in its tranquil flow.
It dons and doffs its many moods
As fairy fancies come and go.
And you never know as you watch its play,
What mood will reign in a little while,
As deftly it winds in its whimsical way,
Wrapped in contentment or wreathed in a smile.

T. R. Powell.

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THE SCRIBBLER

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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NO. 1

THE GRADUATE COACHING SYSTEM

It is not so very long since our football teams here at Illinois were coached by outsiders, who were called from other colleges and hired to take charge of our players and tutor them in the intricacies of the game. As an institution, however, the professional coach was never a success, so in 1904, five years ago, the graduate coaching system was installed.

The first team under the new regime was a good one; we tied Chicago, six to six. Next year the team was but mediocre and the enthusiasm over alumni coaches began to subside. Three years ago, when oblivion was escaped only by the narrow margin of a six to nothing victory over the poorest team in the Conference, sentiment against the new system became rampant. Last year—we started the season with a forty-two to six defeat by Chicago—the whole University was frankly antagonistic. Artie Hall, when they too insistently demand his return, sometimes repeats a scrap of conversation he overheard at this game. One loyal orange and blue rooter spoke to his companion, also a loyal orange and blue rooter:

“What are they going to do about the coaching next year?”

“Oh, get Artie Hall again, I suppose.”

“Say, aint that the limit?”

Dissatisfaction was outspoken—there must be a change

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in the coaching system or we never would have a good team.

The pendulum has returned ; not only do we circulate monster petitions demanding the return of the same coaches we so hastily deserted before, but we present them with magnificent watches as an appreciation of our regard and a testimonial of their efficient services. Evidently the voice of the undergraduate means little ; let us listen to an authority.

I am a firm believer in the graduate coaching system, and I think it is unquestionably the best system for Illinois. Our success this year has, by demonstrating the fact that our alumni coaches can compete on equal terms with the highly paid professional coaches of other universities, removed the only plausible argument of the opposition—that graduate coaching is not practible. And we are not alone. For instance, the football teams of Yale university, perhaps the most uniformly successful in the country, have always been coached by old Yale men. My idea is, in the first place, that no one should ever hear of the coach. It should be the team and the team only, first, last, and always. Let us see what happens when it is otherwise. Take, for illustration, the big Chicago-Michigan games four or five years ago. Was it Michigan who played Chicago or was it one head coach against another? The game with professional coaches degenerates into a mere chess tournament in which one coach starts out with eleven men in a field checkered into five-yard squares to defeat another coach with eleven other men. If this is the letter of amateur athletics it is certainly not the spirit, and emphatically, it is not what we want at Illinois.

There are always certain inherent disadvantages connected with the professional coach besides this. But very few desire to make coaching their life-work and so the professional coach either has some other business that he is interested in or he is always looking around for something better. This being the case, the football team is not at all likely to receive his undivided attention. Again, he is not sure whether or not he will be retained for the

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coming season and hence he takes but little interest in the substitutes and freshmen who will constitute the varsity next year, let alone the class teams that occasionally furnish a man of varsity calibre. Every time the coach is changed, an event that is likely to occur frequently when an outsider is in charge, it means the team must start again from the beginning. All that was learned last year must be discarded, to be supplanted by the ideas of the newcomer, who knows neither the men he is to deal with nor the style of game they have played. All continuity is broken and continuity is a big factor in any team's career. It is not at all improbable that the success of our team this season was as much due to last year's drill as to this year's coaching.

There is another thing to consider. It is the coach in the last analysis who determines the kind of game played, and it is his influence more than any other that strengthens the moral fibre of the players. When outsiders are hired to coach, nothing is known of their character or personality, both of which are of prime importance in a football coach or any one else who is to instruct or influence others. Those familiar with the athletic situation here seven or eight years ago will recollect the many sad experiences Illinois has had with professional football coaches.

Last of all, when we have graduate coaches, it is the Illinois game that we play, a game that was learned and developed on Illinois field. There exists a different kind of spirit than can be obtained in any other way. We know and trust our coaches; it is no purely mercenary motive that interests them, they too have striven for the orange and blue. We feel confident that nothing will be done to disgrace the name or reputation of Illinois and that no underhanded means will be stooped to in order to secure a specious victory. There will be none of the feeling that prompted one coach to tell his players the night before the game "to get Sinnock, for they have no other quarter." Athletics and especially football are the one thing more than anything else that keeps the graduate in touch with his alma mater, and when success comes it is all the more dear through the knowledge that there is an Illinois man behind it. The men who were in school with Hall or Lindgren or Cook or Lowenthal take a more active interest in the sport when they remember that Hall was a classmate. Here is the desirable