

CHAPTER XXXI

THE CLAN-NA-GAEL

With the class of '93 there entered from Milwaukee a young man by the name of George Katz. George applied for admission to Athena debating club and, having been rejected, joined Philomathia, where he and Grandfather soon became very friendly. As a debater, George was brilliant until he became excited. Then he began to slow up and lose effectiveness. He once told Grandfather that the reason for this was that his early education had been in the German language and when he got excited he began to think in German and had to stop and translate his thoughts into English.

Early in their Freshman year George met Grandfather on the street one day and said: "I have just found out about University politics, and they are all wrong. There is a group of Irishmen whom some call the Clan-na-Gael who run all politics. They had a caucus last night and adopted a slate for the coming election of the 'Aegis' (the college monthly which was at that time the only student publication at University of Wisconsin) and here is the list. Now that is not right, is it?"

Grandfather assented that it did not sound right. "Well," says George, "we ought to do something about it." "But," replies Grandfather, "we are only Freshmen, what can we do about it?" "Well, something ought to be done about it," says George.

At the Aegis' election held in Library Hall, at which all subscribers might vote, it turned out that George was quite right as to his slate. For editor-in-chief, the first name on the caucus list was nominated, whereupon Katz, a Freshman, small of stature, with red hair and a high-pitched voice, dared loudly to nominate one of the outstanding men of the University for the place. Irritation was manifest, but a vote was ordered and the caucus candidate was elected.

Then for first assistant editor Katz again offered a nomination, necessitating another ballot, and so down the entire list, with a growing irritation on the part of the Clan-na-Gael to this unexpected challenge of their political monopoly by a presumptive Freshman. By constantly diminishing majorities the Clan-na-Gael carried through their slate, and with the last caucus candidate elected, one of the Clan in a playful speech, extolled the qualities of the Freshman who had made the nominations and ended by nominating him for the job of printer's devil.

This led to tumultuous laughter and applause, in the midst of which Katz leapt onto a chair and began to shout in his high-pitched voice: "Mr. President, Mr. President." At last the crowd quieted down to hear what he might say. Whereupon Katz with dramatic gestures shouted: "I thank the honorable gentleman for his compliments and for the honor he had done me in nominating me for the distinguished office of printer's devil, but I wish to state that even if elected, I cannot qualify - I am not (a dramatic pause) an Irishman." Pandemonium reigned, someone moved to appoint a committee to ascertain the nationality of Katz, and the meeting broke up in a near riot.

Thus started a political scrap between Katz and the Clan-na-Gael which lent much color to the four years that '93 were on the campus and lasted over one year longer while Katz and some of the Clan were in law school.

Grandfather will write on only one phase of this colorful battle. The Badger, issued each year by the Junior class, contained each year group pictures of various University organizations and choice collection of "roasts" on those who incurred the displeasure of some member of the Badger Board.

When toward the latter part of our Sophomore year, it came time to elect a Badger Board for the class of 1893, Grandfather desired to have Katz chosen as one of the members, for he felt that Katz probably had more ability in this line than anyone else in the class. While the ability of Katz was generally recognized, his chances of election in view of his war on the political leaders appeared slim. However, a carefully planned strategy proved successful. Grandfather nominated a group containing two whom the Clan would like on the Board but would have difficulty in electing together with Katz. They took the bait and elected Katz to get berths for the other two.

Katz was not chosen chairman of the Board, but became one of its most active literary workers. Katz, of course, was for once immune from roasts and he saw that his friends were rewarded with nice compliments. The book appeared in the year of Grandfather's Joint Debate. Pictures of the winning team were given a full page in the Badger and there was also a page of text which began: "It is an undisputed fact that to be a joint

debater is one of the highest honors that one can win in his University course. To have won the debate is still greater honor. The Badger, this year, presents to its readers the pictures of those whose industry have given them so high a place in our literary circles."

In the history of the Junior class it was recorded: "Nor will the sages be forgotten, for truly Myers, Parlin and Dunlevy are immortal. For the games will laurels be wreathed for Butt, Beebe and Summer. Grace, beauty and loveliness to all the ladies of '93."

The history of Philomathia closes: "We have among us the charming Rosebud and the dashing Joe, the gentle sister Sarles and the sweet warbler Beebe. Let the University show us a man of greater firmness than Herbert Haskell, a man of deeper or broader scholarship than our John J. Schleicher, or as ready and bright a wit as the child of our hope, Charlie Parlin."

The next year the Clan controlled the Badger and Katz knew he was out of luck. In the list of Seniors they printed his name in absurdly heavy bold faced type, twice the height of that used for other Seniors, for his Habitatio they recorded "Place being made to order; earth too small", and for his Singularis "goes without stating".

Someone got hold of a snapshot of Katz posing in a monk's gown and cap with arms folded prayerfully. The Badger gave a whole page to its reproduction without title or comment.

In a write-up of the preceding year's Badger Board, they said: "George H. Katz, was born July 4, 1876," (He was, of course, born five or six years earlier and presumably on some other day) "and is a truly

fitting souvenir of the hundredth anniversary of American Independence. The extreme youth of Mr. Katz makes his connection with the book very remarkable. He is a boy of many talents and is acknowledged by all to be real cute. He is connected at the present time with the Aegis, but it is rumored that he, as well as Miss Murphy, have had urgent calls to serve as assistant editors of Puck, which positions they will probably accept as soon as their college work is finished."

An unexpected event gave Katz a chance for retaliation. The preceding year, as recorded elsewhere, a college daily had been started and the popularity of the new college publication created for the Aegis (the long established fortnightly publication) competitive problems with which the Aegis editor-in-chief was unable to cope. He resigned, a new election was called, no one would accept the position and finally, in a playful mood, someone nominated George Katz, and with much mirth the crowd loudly shouted "Aye" to elect George editor-in-chief of the Aegis.

The crowd left laughing at the joke they had perpetrated on Katz, but by the next day some who had laughed loudest began to think of two facts which on the spur of the moment had been overlooked. First, the Aegis in the hands of a really capable man might be changed in character and win for itself an important place in University life; second, the editor-in chief of the Aegis would, according to tradition, review '94's Badger. Perhaps the election of Katz might turn out to have been a mistake. Soon the Aegis began to take on new life and by the time the long-heralded Badger of the Class of 1894 appeared, the University was agog as to what the Aegis would say in its review. Katz had his college

work well in hand that he might be able to furnish the University the thrill for which it was looking.

Previous Aegis reviews of Badgers had consisted of a few pleasant platitudes. The review of '94's Badger was likely to be different - and different indeed it was. Professor Haskin, who afterward became dean of Harvard Graduate School, said it was the most clever piece of college writing he had ever read.

Before writing the review Katz subjected '94's Badger to a thoroughgoing and merciless study such as no Badger had ever had before. With all the facts well in hand, he feigned the complimentary attitude which was traditional in Aegis review of the Badger, but proceeded to bring out casually numberless errors and absurdities until the whole book seemed a "mess". He paid sincere tribute to the Badger's best features, but with each of these good features he complimented the author by name, thus calling attention to the fact that the best features of '94's Badger were contributed by students outside the class of 1894.

Probably some previous editions of the Badger had been filled with errors and had obtained some of their prize features from talent outside the class, but no one before had ever pointed out such things. As a result of this witty analysis, the class of 1894 appeared strangely incompetent to get out a book and the review of the Badger was so much more clever than anything in the Badger itself that '94's Badger soon was laughed out of student regard. The Clan did not control the election of the next Badger Board. However, that seemed to mean little to the members of Grandfather's class for '93 graduated before the book appeared.

In this Badger, however, was the climax of our story, for in '95's Badger appeared a poem entitled "Hibernia's Festival". In this poem a group of Athena's ex-joint debaters, the men with whom Katz had had his political controversies, were depicted as meeting in a saloon to discuss plans for the future of the next Clan joint debate. The names were slightly altered in their spelling and the University was named as Wyoming, but no one could mistake the persons. Three ambitions of the society are expounded by well known members - (1) "skillful wire pulling leads to victory and then to sports", (2) to win joint debates by "shrewd trickery, juggling deceit and guile", (3) "sworn hatred to frats."

When the Badger appeared, an explosion of wrath occurred. Johnson, who was depicted as arguing the winning of debates by unfair tactics, threatened suit against the University, and the pot of politics began to boil over. The Board of Regents suppressed the Badger and ordered destroyed all copies which had not been sold.

Then a cry went up for the scalp of the author. The author was never known, except to about three people, all of whom had promised they never would tell. Without violating any confidence, however, Grandfather may record that when this cry for a scalp went up, it was found that Katz had taken passage for Europe.

The poem was as follows:

HIBERNIA'S FESTIVAL

It was Hibernia's triumph. Oldest, she
Among the debating clubs, of which did boast
The University of W-yoming. Once more
In Joint Debate she overcame her enemy

The Hesperid. This victory to proclaim
A love-feast held her sons at Tommy M.'s.
Full well they gorged their forms. But not
Of this the BADGER sings; but of the attic salt
That graced their banquet. Of noble words
In which they praised their mighty mother
And themselves - her brave begotten sons.

First spake the worthiest, a bearded chief.
Ryley by name, of royal stock; for in his veins
Mingled the blood of Kieran and Muck-Murrackill.
('Twas he, long afterward in Oshkosh known,
And worshiped e'en as boss and demagog.)

"Ye call me chief, and ye do well. For I
Excel ye all in wordy eloquence,
In bluff and in the art political.
I pledge you joy to this our vistory,
Which doth proclaim Hibernia's championship.
But, furthermore, it is 'fore all the world
The triumph of her system, handed down
E'en from her founders, who, in eighteen fifty,
Inaugurated Clique and Clan.
To stick together is our ancient policy;
By means of fair or foul, by force or guile
Our mutual interests to advance, such
Is Hibernia's motto. Skillful wire-pulling
In caucus and election ever leads to victory,
And thence - to spoils. Inculcate thus
With lofty principle Hibernia hath prospered.
Her roll of honor bears full many a name
Of Erin's sons - all politicians smooth.
Tommy O'Ryan and O'Kalaher;
The peerless Dockery Twins, and F. McGovran, shrewd;
Cunningham, Healy and O'Rafferty,
The Frawleys, Feeneys, Kelly and O'Keefe -
All noble members of Camp Twenty-Two.
These first in rank; others there are;
Jacobs, who holds a foot-ball fellowship.
And Elward, bombast, myriad-minded.
Ours was King Kaiser, Kirby-Thomas, too,
And Walter Smith, who basks in Venus' smiles.
Alas the time's too short to mention all.
Hibernians, would you sustain our ancient fame -
Be true to principle; to clique and clan!
Alliance, firmly knit, against the world prevails,
and pull political, not worth, doth make the man!

Next arose Johnstone, long and gaunt of frame,
 A wily henchman. Fain would I
 Agree with Chieftain Ryley. Greatly I fear
 Our new-cemented love again to rupture,
 Remembering recent conflict, when I led
 Hibernians embattled, reared in rebellion bold
 To war 'gainst his omnipotence.
 Yet him gainsay I must. Clique and Clan
 Are mighty aids to victory. Yet insufficient they
 Without shrewd trickery, juggling deceit and guile.
 The jury racket is Hibernia's forte;
 We spot our man! Thus victories manifold
 Are won. Alumni have we scattered through the town
 Who act as spies in furtherance of our end.
 On them we may rely.
 But this mayhap in future insufficient prove
 To guard our prestige. Enemies wax strong -
 The Hesperid, and even Philo young,
 Extend a grasping finger toward our laurel.
 One course remains - to break the league
 That wrought was with much labor, thought and counsel.
Then we'll be safe, and not till then,
 The task is easy - delegate some subtle son -
 As Rowan here - with deft Italian hand
 To cut the strands e'en of the bond that binds us!
 Such counsel I unto your hearts commend:
 Deceit and trickery alone insure our end.

He ceased. Anon arose a chieftain bold,
 Whose strong, Herculean frame on foot-ball field
 More glory won than e'er his heavy tongue;
 Killie by name, with dulcet fog horn voice
 Who thus began:
 I, too, rejoice with you in great Hibernia's glory;
 In it behold the triumph of a policy,
 But not, I deem of such import as Ryley,
 The Clan and Clique system; nor e'en
 The vaunted tricks and schemes of Johnstone shrewd;
 Sworn hatred to the Frats - that, that hath made
 Hibernia great! And this her rule of action
 Forever was and e'er shall be.
 We ever have opposed this cursed system.
 We stand - a noble A.P.A. - to guard
 The University from secret enemies.
 To Frats who there sought membership.
 Our shrewd committees spy them out,
 And blackball soon the trustful applicant.
 True, that in dearth of brain we do elect
 At times a Frat, as the Allani twain,

Upon our teams; yet, 'tis not often so,
And should one 'scape the eye of watchers keen,
Intrude into our sacred fold of brotherhood,
Soon he flies our ever-burning hatred unconsumed!

In every place, in every college meeting,
Hibernia's clan doth war her enemy, the Frat.
Who are they, whom we seek t'exterminate?
Clotheshorses, who their tailor's art display!
Sleek, well-groomed swells with hollow pates aloft!
Clubmen, who sit around and smoke, and yawn,
Each thinking that the other's quite a chap,
When neither's that. Those the victims are,
Gorging whose blood Hibernia has grown great!
Their downfall our success, their shame our glory -
In chorus let us raise Hibernia's motto gory;
Death to the Frat!

He spake. And at his bidding rose
A shout that shook Saint Julien's aged walls;
A howl, such as the fiends once belched forth.
"Hurling defiance to the vault of heaven!"
Into the air there flew a score of demijohns,
Shillalahs whirled thro' space; chaos once more
Reigned sov'reign.

Anon the turmoil ceased. For law and order
O'er misrule and rebellion ever conquer must.
As midnight tolled, the mighty Adamson,
The stalwart guardian of the city's peace
Bid them disperse.

A moment, silence reigned, a moment only.
Then, with uprising vote and swelling voice,
Once more they pledged Hibernia's Clique and Clan,
And then, with hearse and horrid din,
Dispersed into the night.