

J. G. Shedd Aquarium Inspected On Trip By Civil Upperclassmen

Last Friday, October 26, the junior and senior Civils were excused from their afternoon classes to attend an inspection trip. This trip was under the auspices of the Chicago Branch of the Western Society of Engineers, and included an inspection of the John G. Shedd Aquarium that is being built at Roosevelt Road and the lake, and also an examination of the huge dredges near Roosevelt Road that are the property of the Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Co.

The construction work at the Aquarium was exceptionally interesting as it involved reinforced concrete, stone masonry, terra cotta, and steel. The floor system and the fresh and salt water reservoirs are all of concrete construction, in which pumice was used in the aggregate to secure a very dense and hard concrete. Tests made by different companies as to the quality of the concrete used on the job have given results of the highest order.

All Columns Concreted
The basement columns are of concrete or concrete encased steel which rest on concrete piers sunk in the ground, which in turn are supported on a cluster of wooden piles that have direct bearing on bed rock. All of the columns on the mezzanine and the first floor are of steel encased in concrete. On the first floor there is the Octagon Hall from which branches eight corridors that will be filled with exhibits. The roofs of these halls are of steel arch construction and the structural details encountered are very complex and were a source of surprise to all who witnessed the complicated connections. The upper columns that support the arches are encased in concrete, but the arch itself is coated with a special preservative preparation.

Vehicular Driveway
In the basement of the Aquarium there is a vehicular driveway for the convenience of automobile traffic. The building is heated from the plant of the Field Museum, the heating pipes coming through a concrete tunnel to the southwest end of the Aquarium. This method of heating is more economical than by providing a separate heating plant. The tunnel will be used for pipes only.

Largest in the World
When completed, this aquarium will be the largest in the world. Admission charges will be required for the financial support of the building, since the original amount donated for its construction does not include maintenance.

Large Dredges Inspected
Another surprise was in store for the group when they proceeded to inspect the Great Lakes' dredges which were anchored about a quarter of a mile away. These dredges contained not the one big greasy boiler, as many had expected to see, but machinery of the latest type in spic-and-span condition, — everything clean and well polished.

After wandering past rows of gigantic Diesel engines, whirling generators, paneled staterooms, the C. E.'s landed in the pilot house, looked at the Sperry gyroscopic compass, signed their names, smoked the free cigars, and listened to an explanation of the dredge's operation.

The Diesel engines are used to generate current for the operation of the 700 H. P. motor that is shaft connected to the clam-shell shaped wheel which digs out the material. This wheel is placed at the end of a long boom which can be raised and lowered by means of cables. Directly beneath and behind the vane digger is the opening of the suction pipe through which the loosened material is drawn by means of large centrifugal pumps. All controls are conveniently arranged in the pilot house, the captain directing operations from a comfortable chair.

Older Dredge: Steam Operated
The older boats were steam operated and were noticeably dirtier. Their method of operation was similar to the newer one except that it was necessary to have a complicated gear train to permit tilting the boom.

After the Civils had climbed the steep stairs, crossed the gangplanks, and peered through innumerable port holes, they began to feel very nautical. A good time was had while assimilating much valuable information.

Mystery Writer



HARRY STEPHEN KEELER

ALUMNUS WINS WIDE FAME AS PLOT WIZARD

When we find old grads of Armour Tech holding down positions as heads of huge manufacturing concerns, or as world-famous engineers, we are not at all surprised, for that is where we expect them to end up at. But when we find an alumnus holding the distinction of being one of the leading writers of mystery stories in the country, having to his credit a mathematically expressed and much discussed law propounding the mental moves necessary toward intricate plot construction our attention is aroused.

Such a personage is Harry Stephen Keeler, author of "The Voice of the Seven Sparrows," "Find the Clock," "Sing Sing Nights," "The Amazing Web," "The Clash of Identities," and dozens of others.

He spent five years at Armour Tech, from 1907 to 1912, and took a little of everything, studying in the departments of E. E., M. E., and C. E. Already in his student days at Armour he was busy at his, at that time, hobby, for he wrote regularly for mystery story magazines and earned a neat bit of expense money for himself.

Finally one day in 1912, in typical Keeler fashion, he announced that he was going to quit. He was in Professor Paul's class in Hydraulics at the time. "At the end of the hour," says Professor Paul, "he came up to me and said without any hesitation, 'I'll never make an engineer. I'm going to quit and devote my time to writing.' He never came to class again."

Perhaps we can find adequate explanation of Mr. Keeler's peculiar talent for writing stories in which murders and mysteries run rampant in the fact that he was born in the same room in which machine guns were stationed to kill Hymie Weiss years later.

In any event we don't wonder a bit at his widespread fame, after reading one or two of his thrilling productions, for his gripping tales of underworld drama in the big cities, woven into the most involved and intricate plots which enmesh the reader in their very intrigues, the only method of untangling being to finish the book at a sitting, are of such merit as to make many an erstwhile writer of mystery tales crawl back into his hole.

There's nothing secret about Mr. Keeler's method of constructing a plot. To the contrary, he has published his methods in the form of a sort of text-book on plot construction, and has named it "The Mechanics (and Kinematics) of Web-Work Plot Construction." He has applied his engineering training, received at Armour Tech, to weaving plots and constructing drama, and has made a phenomenal success of it. He calls Armour the "school where, strange to say, I learned all I know about plot construction."

In a statement concerning this book on plot construction, Mr. Keeler said, "Starting with elementals, I have endeavored to treat 'plot' as something analyzable into two components,—force and direction, i. e., its mechanics and its kinematics.

"In dealing with the force aspect of the plot, I have dealt with motivating and motivating, false and correct, with examples: the passive plot

thread and the active plot thread. I have shown the mental processes involved in every bit of plotting, and the number of combinations of these processes; also I have analyzed the 'blocking' or 'going up a blind alley' phase of plotting into three components, proving that all 'blind alleys' is due to a combination of three elements that are 'against the plotter'. I have also dealt with some peculiar phenomena, such as how motivating an incident can destroy the motivation, and the converse of this proposition."

This should give engineering students, who are inclined to visualize all their mathematics and mechanics as applied to cold steel, something to think about. Does the experience of this engineer, for that he certainly is, open up a new field of endeavor for the engineering graduates of the future?

Mr. Keeler has remained a Chicagoan, his work-shop being at 1321 Addison Boulevard. This work-shop in itself is especially interesting. One wall is completely taken up with three gigantic maps of the "three mystery cities of the world"—Chicago, Paris, and London, each fitted with a huge battery of pins with brilliantly colored disks as heads, and capable of being inserted at any point on the map to mark the progress of the story.

An immense blackboard covers the adjoining wall, which with colored chalks and vertically and horizontally ruled lines shows the chronological position of every character at any moment in a mystery novel he would be writing. A third wall has every inch of its area covered with a huge filing cabinet, containing several hundreds of drawers, in which is tabulated, in very neat and concise form, material and information pertaining to almost every conceivable subject from Chinese curios to such branches of science as sociology and psychiatry.

A description of his workshop would by no means be complete without including one of his most prized possessions, a pet rabbit which makes

Corn Stalks Adorn T. X. House at Dance

The annual Halloween Dance of the Armour Chapter of Theta Xi was held at the Chapter House last Saturday evening. The House began taking on an atmosphere of Halloween Wednesday, and by Saturday it was gorgeously decorated with corn stalks, pumpkins, paper streamers, and drawings made by the architects, which were used to decorate the large mirrors on the first floor.

About seventy couples attended, quite a few of which were guests. There were brothers from Illinois, Purdue, and our own alumni. Several men from the other fraternities at Armour were also present.

The music was furnished by the "White Friars." Chaperones were: Mr. and Mrs. L. Dean Alber and Mr. and Mrs. Martin Hussander.

its home in his waste-basket.

"I know you'll be terribly disappointed," said Harry Stephen Keeler, "for you hoped to find literary atmosphere here. But there it—or he—is." Pointing to the rabbit, "That's H. L. Mencken. That's the atmosphere."

Ed. Note: A review of two of Harry Stephen Keeler's best known books, "The Voice of the Seven Sparrows," and "Sing Sing Nights," will appear in the Book Review column next week.)

The bi-yearly convention of Chi Epsilon, national honorary Civil Engineering Fraternity, will be held on Nov. 3 and 4 at Madison, Wis. The Armour Chapter will be represented by R. F. Stellar.

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Frosh Dance Plans Being Formulated

Donald Chapman, the newly elected social chairman of the freshman class, will appoint a social committee of five at the next meeting of the class, the date of which has not yet been announced.

This committee will make plans for the freshman social functions of the coming year. The freshman dance will be held some time after Christmas, and if successful, the surplus money will be used for some other function, such as a summer social.

FRATERNITY NOTES

DELTA TAU DELTA

The Deltas acted as host to a number of their members from Purdue University who visited the Armour Chapter before and after the Purdue-Chicago football game last Saturday. The members of the Armour chapter were guests at a house dance of the U. of C. chapter held that evening.

J. M. Jacobson, '29, vice president of Kappa Delta Tau fraternity, has been serving in the capacity of president while W. N. Olefsky, '30, is out on a leave of absence. Olefsky was

LETTER-BOX

A.I.T., Oct. 29, 1928.

Letter-Box:

I overheard two of our prominent chemistry professors swapping definitions of what education is. They struck me rather forcibly. Here they are:

1. Education is that which is taught in normal colleges by abnormal professors to subnormal students.

2. Education is that which is left when you've forgotten all the facts that have been crammed into your head in college.

I wonder what others think of them. Have any of them any better ones?
—Eave-dropper.

forced to remain out of school for a while because of financial reasons, and is at present employed as an architect for the Board of Education.

Rho Delta Rho is planning a house dance for Saturday, November 3.

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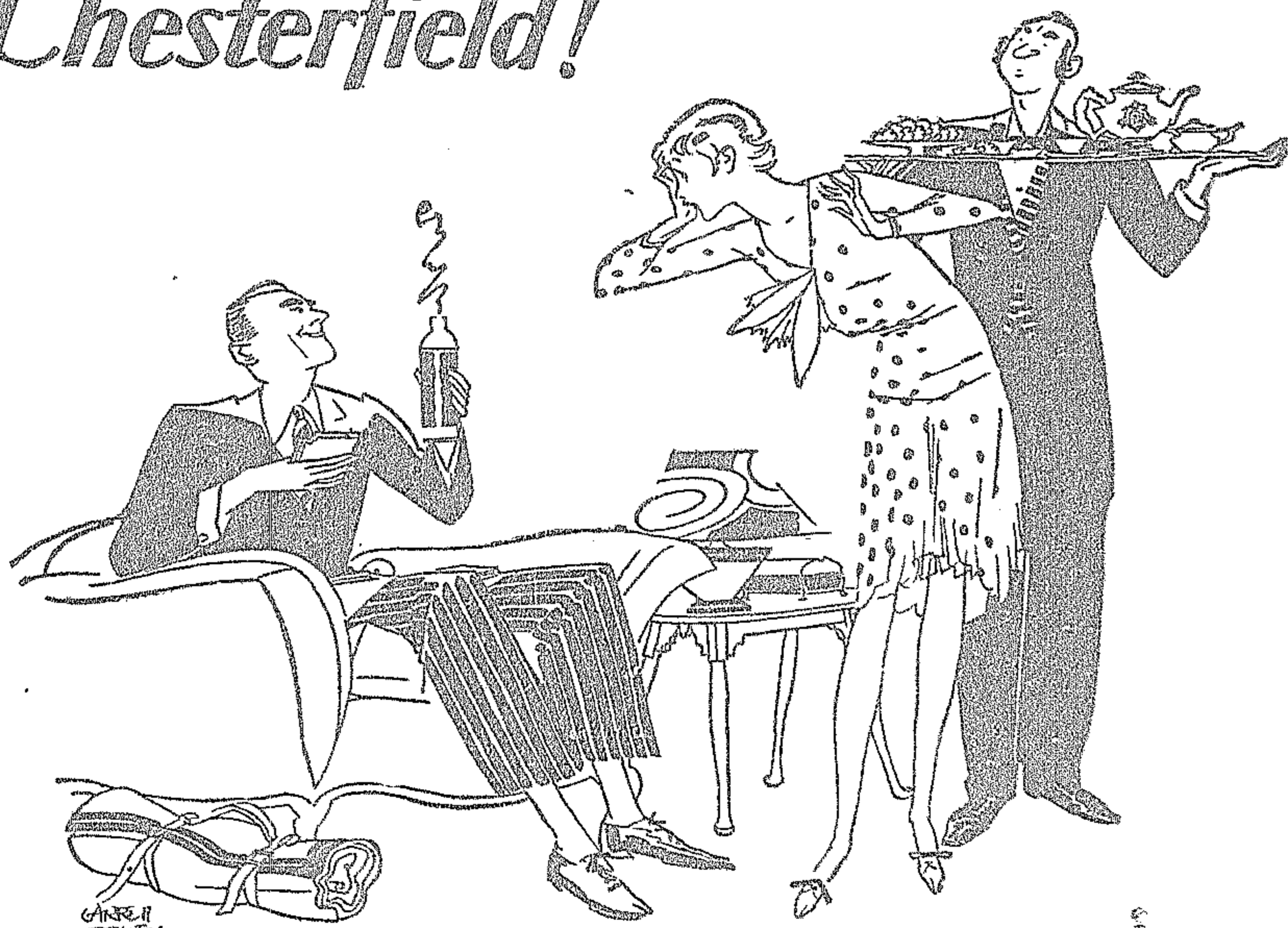
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"I'd rather have a Chesterfield!"



It is considered the height of bad form, they say, to carry your own sandwiches to a tea—or to pack your own blanket for the week-end—but luckily, no such outlandish conventions surround the smoking of your own cigarette.

"I'd rather have a Chesterfield," fortunately, is a phrase which not only remains "good cricket" in polite circles—but at the same time brands the smoker as a person of rare

discernment and excellent discrimination.

And small wonder, considering all the remark implies. Good taste, top quality, the rare sparkle of tobacco goodness—all these combine to justify the choice of that man who thus shows his keen judgment.

"I'd rather have a Chesterfield"—a neat line, that—the mark of a real connoisseur and the password of six million smokers.

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