

Essay on A College Social

A college social is a gathering of the students and teachers of a college on a plane of social union. The students are the hosts; the teachers, the ex-students, and guardians attend as guests. The object is to meet each other away from the formalities of the classroom in an atmosphere of friendliness and freedom. It is nowadays recognized as a necessary part of academic life. Therefore every college has its social union on particular days. There is one on the Saraswati Puja day: there is usually a second one which is often the occasion of bidding farewell to outgoing students of the year. The practice varies from college to college, and each has its own convention.

It strikes me that our social unions are too artificial. Students go about 'hiring' star singers or dancers for the occasion. These come and push the student performers into the background, and occupy the stage. Often there is a cheap music-hall atmosphere on these occasions. There is no scope for friendly meetings or enjoyment of pleasant companionship. Students often forget the decencies that should characterize an association of cultured people. They boost up their favorite stars and shout down those who are not. It is hardly possible to be one's ease, and thus the object of a social union is defeated.

In my opinion, social unions for students should never be held outside the college. The different halls of the college itself should be their meeting place for students, teachers, and their guests. The entertainment should be provided by students and teachers. There are many fine 'artists' among both teachers and students. They should hold soirees in the various halls. We all should sit around the performers on the floor in true style. In one hall, the best classical singers may display their artistry. In another, there may be instrumental music. There may be recitals in a third, comedic skit

in a fourth, and so on. In one or two halls students may display their exhibits – photography or painting calligraphy or philately, – whatever may be worth displaying. Guests will distribute themselves in the different halls according to their likes. Light refreshments now are served, as nothing sweetens friendship more than a few choice sweets. An arrangement like this would not only bring all of us on a level of true camaraderie, but it would enable each to exhibit that in which he most excels.

I make these suggestions as my experience at our last social has left a bad impression on my mind. The gathering took place in a big public hall. The gathering was big; the disorder was bigger. Unpleasant remarks were thrown about. I could not stay until the end. For me the stuff served was too hot. Few cared to listen to the songs or the recitals; I am sure none appreciated or enjoyed anything. I again repeat, student's social must not degenerate into cheap music-hall gatherings.

Really it is the time we students took up this matter in hand and brought about a change. We must raise the standard even of our amusements. We must appeal to the higher tastes, not pander to the lower. Naturally, this duty devolves upon the students' union. Students must show that they are capable of better things than these shoddy affairs; they must get the mass of students to take an active interest in social unions.

At the same time, we must sound a note of warning. In trying to avoid vulgarity, let us not become stuck-up highbrows. To strike a superior attitude is artificial. A social function should express the natural tastes and ideals of the community at its best. Every effort must be made to help students and teachers to meet each other in perfect freedom, each contributing something to the social life of the entire community. There must be free but not license, enjoyment without

vulgarity, festivity but no excess of any kind.

As a suggestion, I would wish college socials not to become too stereotyped. Variety is the spice of enjoyment, a rigid, unvaried program at each social function reduces it to a routine. There should be some imaginative planning to make a success of it every time a function is held. Thus if we celebrate one year's function in the college, we may have the next outside the college. It may be a picnic in some pleasant garden away from the city. It may be a steamer trip down the river. It may take the form of a sports gathering with music and luncheon after the day's events. In a word, students must actively think out new plans each year. Ideas may be invited and even prizes offered for the best suggestion made. The essence of the thing is that college socials must not only reflect the life of the students, but it must also be a living reflection of that life. It would be a good idea to invite new suggestions from students.