

My Friend Einstein

WILLIAM ORBAUGH

DURING the course of the late war, I had the very good fortune to find myself exposed for a time to the time-honored traditions of Princeton University. Perhaps not so ancient, but none the less honored, was Princeton's current tradition: my most unforgettable character, Albert Einstein.

The many anecdotes about this great man, told almost reverently by his admiring students, are legend on the Princeton campus.

On brisk autumn mornings, the professor could be seen striding across a wide plot of lawn on his way to a morning lecture on theoretical physics. He was a little man, and bounced along his way with a rolling gait, seemingly oblivious to the passing train of sleepy eyed students and stray dogs. He usually wore a dirty suede jacket which was wretchedly out of shape because of his habit of stuffing his hands deep into the pockets as he chopped along through the wet grass.

I never knew the professor to use the walks and pathways on the campus except as obstacles to negotiate in his trek from building to building. He seemed to have an aversion of the heavy traffic on the walks, and demonstrated an almost uncanny ability in plotting a straight course to his destination, proceeding over great grassy malls and low rolling terrain with unfaltering confidence. Along with this amazing accuracy in divining a straight line to his objective, the professor displayed an unconscious agility in avoiding gopher-holes, stumps, curbstones, and

structures which often arrayed themselves against his steady advance.

While floating along in his morning reverie, he kept his eyes cast on the ground, with a pipe stuck in his mouth, on which he puffed continually. Momentarily, he would extract from his trouser pocket a book of matches and quickly scribble a notation with a short, stubby pencil on the back of the cover.

The professor never wore a hat, but wrapped a red, wooly muffler several times about his neck. The wind often skewed his long wiry hair into great disarray, at times giving it the appearance of an Indian war-bonnet of white bristling feathers. He usually wore an old pair of tired looking corduroy trousers with "apples in the knees," and often, being fond of exercising in the gymnasium, he could be seen padding about the halls in old canvas tennis shoes. In general he presented a very collegiate figure indeed.

Very often the professor appeared in the lecture room in this attire, usually wearing a rumpled sweat-shirt with his coeds and sneakers. Standing on the rostrum, his hair tousled, he presented an almost comic picture as he fumbled in his trouser pockets and came forth with the dirty little match-covers which were covered with scrawled formulas and scribbled equations. But no one laughed at the little man. The lecture was conducted in an atmosphere which was very much like a church service: the students listened attentively as the professor spoke in a sharp metallic voice, outlining some phase of theoretical physics in terms of his ideas of relativity.

The only thing which could cause a

departure from his decorous bearing, the only thing which irritated the little man, was for someone to fall asleep in his perplexity: on these occasions, the professor was moved to a bit of deviltry, and took seeming delight in lobbing a piece of chalk at the offender, after waving excitedly aside any students who might obstruct his target. In this operation, as before, the professor's accuracy in calculating the precise trajectory for his projectile was amazing. When the bit of chalk found its mark, and the sleeper started with surprise, perhaps casting a hostile eye about him while the class cackled with glee, the professor would only grin sheepishly as he resumed his lecture.

On one most memorable occasion,

while Professor Einstein was ambling along in a sort of intellectual "haze," his radar appeared to be on the blink, because we collided quite forcibly in the hall.

"Oops! Sorry, son," the professor exclaimed, as he regained his bearing and scooted off down the hall. I remember how I stood, staring dumbly after the retreating figure . . . perhaps the greatest mind which mankind has ever produced. I felt so alone. I wished the people back in Indiana could have seen me . . . knocking around with Einstein!

After my conversation with Einstein, and ever since, I have felt quite justified in referring to the professor as a friend of mine. Don't you agree . . . relatively speaking?

An Ode To Night

R. J. PAYNE

When I forget the soft spring rain
Upon the roof, or its command to sleep,
And to awake refreshed and healed;
Or the soft and heady fragrance
Of the new cut hay that comes drifting
From the fields, whose gloom of shadows
Are spangled with the milky-way of fire-flies;
When stirs me not the golden harvest moon,
Set in the smoky frost of Fall;
Or, if the warm, round lover's moon of Spring
Awakes me not, then Age has brushed me by,
And He will soon return.