

**THE THIRD
CATALOGUE
OF THE SIGNET**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649476732

The Third Catalogue of the Signet by Various

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THE MERRYMOUNT PRESS
BOSTON, MDCCCCIII

PREFATORY NOTE

THIS Catalogue contains the names of seven hundred and twelve persons, of whom six hundred and nineteen were elected as regular and ninety-three as honorary members. The deceased number forty-two regular and seven honorary members, leaving a total of six hundred and sixty-three living Signet men. A tabular list of the occupations of regular members from the classes of 1871 to 1901 shows the following result: Lawyers 178; Business men 103; Teachers 70; Physicians 41; Clergymen 27; Journalists and Writers 25; Artists and Architects 21; Miscellaneous 49.

The Frontispiece is a reproduction of the book-plate presented to the Society by James H. Hyde, '98.

The Seal incorporated in the design is described in the Records as follows:

Arms: Gules, a signet ring or, surrounded by seven bees of the same marked with sable.

Crest: From a fillet or and sable, a dexter forearm issuing, clothed in a sable sleeve with white cuff. The hand proper holding an open book with two clasps and edges or, across the pages of which is inscribed Veritas.

Motto: ΜΟΥΣΙΚΗΝ ΠΟΙΕΙ ΚΑΙ ΕΡΓΑΖΟΥ.

THE BIRTH OF THE SIGNET

THE Class of 1871 was given to innovations. In its Sophomore year some among its members set on foot a society, intended to rival the time-honored "Institute," which for nearly or quite a century had qualified Sophomores for further social development. In its Junior year the same progressive persons attempted, with somewhat less success, to build them monuments more enduring than bronze by organizing a very stormy and short-lived secret society; and afterwards by reviving one of the Greek-letter fraternities, which had some years before died out at Harvard. In its Senior year this element in the class found a safe and salutary exercise for its energies in the formation of the Signet.

The latter came into the college world as the result of a disturbance of cyclonic intensity in class "politics." The founding of a second Sophomore society had not pleased the friends of the first, and partly for this reason, partly for others, some of the more eminently "up-to-date" members of the class found themselves *not* invited to join what was then the most esteemed of upper-class societies: thereupon they entered a comparatively humble rival, so that the latter quickly grew so large and lively that rather pronounced discords became perceptible in its interior, and finally a considerable fraction of its membership shook its dust from their feet.

Shortly after this grave incident it was at first

rumored, afterwards ascertained, that the two societies had formed a "coalition," whereby the several class officers were apportioned between them, and such as fell to the lot of each were to be filled, in each case, by a majority vote of the society obtaining it, all the members of both being pledged to vote for all the nominees thus chosen. The two societies together included about 85 to 90 out of a class of 157, so that the sentiments of a considerable, although quite hopeless, minority on the subject were decidedly "sinistral." Their somewhat pronounced disapproval of the entire arrangement was accentuated by the calling of the Class Meeting, at which officers for Class Day should be chosen, several months before the accustomed date, the reason ascribed by rumor for this novelty being an apprehension on the part of those who had "engineered" the "coalition" lest it should be dissolved by the disintegrating influences of time and public opinion if its practical application should be long delayed. When the meeting had, in fact, been held, and the ticket "put through" as agreed, some of those who had constituted the "yeasty" element in the class were filled with a burning desire to do something which might show how little they liked all these proceedings: to this end the Signet was formed.

Its original constitution declared out of order any proposition tending to make conviviality or participation in class politics an object of its organization; the asceticism professed in thus pla-

cing on its *Index Expurgatorius* any suggestion of indulgence in pleasures of the table was intended as a condemnation of the lax morals in this respect then attributed by reports current among outsiders to the more notable of the "coalesced" societies. But the feeling of its founders was yet more unequivocally shown by a further provision of the constitution which prohibited in terms any member of the Signet from belonging to either of the bodies which had been in unholy alliance. Since then, owing to the softening influences of time, this prohibition has been expunged, but it was probably the most truly characteristic feature of the organization at its birth.

The Signet came into being as an essentially militant body: it existed that it might protest against evils of the day at Harvard; and a sort of crusading, self-asserting spirit marked it from the beginning: a mild joke in the "Harvard Advocate" suggested "a seal rampant" as an emblem for the new society. It believed itself to have, however, and experience has shown that it had, in fact, a broader mission than merely to remedy abuses in the choice of officers for Class Day. Among the fifteen who joined it in 1871 were some who knew little, and cared less, about the disputes and intrigues which had preceded the class election, but who felt strongly that a college society ought not to be a school of frivolity or snobbery, still less one of wire-pulling, and that some societies then existing might be described, un-