EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

HAZING

Following the shameful strike of the Virginia Military Institute cadets, which seems to have been staged as a sort of demonstration against the authorities of the Institute and against Superintendent Cocke in particular, there has been a lot of half-talk concerning General Cocke's method or policy of punishing and preventing hazing. There has been, too, a lot of open talk concerning the imperative necessity for hazing at the great old school: not only the boys themselves in some instances, but a number of the alumni, have publicly declared that hazing is, so to speak, an institutional necessity.

Taking up first the matter of hazing, The Times-Dispatch repeats what it has said on a number of occasions: hazing, in the sense of taking the small-boy conceit, the disinclination to obey, the unhappy effect of spoiling at home, out of new cadets—"rats," if the term is preferred—is both wholesome and helpful. Many a grown man today is thankful for the various forms of snubbing to which he was subjected as a boy—at the Virginia Military Institute and at other schools and colleges. The custom of making new cadets "fin out," which means in reality making them stand straight with their chins in and chests out, is an admirable custom. It is even easy to defend the practice of enforcing it by smart slaps on the back—and even in the midriff.

But the hazing that consists in what cadets used to call "bucking," which means forcing a youngster to lean over a table and then "bucking" him with a broom stick or other weapon—not infrequently until the stick is actually broken—is indefensible on any ground. In the face of assertions of alumni that these practices were never followed stand the assertions of other alumni, some of whom were honor men and cadet officers of their day, that these practices have been followed from time to time for many years. And this contradiction is due to the fact that all the cadets have never known what all the rest of the cadets were always doing. There are ruffians at heart, bullies, cowards in spirit, in every assemblage of boys and men; and some of them have given way to their cruel impulses throughout the honored years of the Virginia Military Institute.

It is these practices that the authorities of the institution have tried to punish and prevent. It is these practices that have led to the dismissal of offending boys. It is these practices, directed against the persons of young boys of comparatively weak physique, that have caused the withdrawal of boys who have left the Institute because they couldn't stand the hazing. The argument of some of the defenders of hazing that the unduly hazed boy has a right to call out his persecutor is all nonsense: what chance has an untrained boy of fifteen against a husky, well-drilled, powerful bully of, say, eighteen or nineteen. The much-vaulted right of combat is, in actual practice, virtually no right at all. The sort of hazing which caused the recent scandal at the Institute, and which led to the disgraceful strike of the corps, must be abolished—
if it is necessary to dismiss all the members
of the third, second and first classes.

As to General Cocke's method and policy:
In approving his system and encouraging
him to proceed as he has proceeded, the
board of visitors of the institution has given
General Cocke complete vindication. The
board is composed, not of outsiders who
know nothing of the school and its traditions, but of profoundly interested men,
most of whom are proud alumni of the V.
M. I. To charge, either directly or by
implication, that these men would condone
—not to say encourage—methods not in
keeping with the lofty spirit and high history
of this splendid old School of Arms would
be to voice an absurdity.

General Cocke has been fully sustained
by the governing authority of the Virginia
Military Institute. All power to him in his
determined effort to stamp out brutality in
the corps of cadets!—Richmond Times-Dis-
patch.

CHICAGO OR THE MIDDLE AGES

It is impossible at this distance to tell
whether Mayor Thompson is sincere or only
playing to the gods. Judging by the general
run of politicians on both sides of the border,
we would fancy that he has an eye
single to political advantage. This "cry"
elected him, and he desires now to keep it
in good working order. It would be silly
for Britishers to be annoyed by the fact
that there is clearly a minority in Chicago
which can be successfully pandered to by
this sort of nonsense. If we looked hard
enough we could probably find a minority
in almost any country which could be
inflamed against another country to the politi-
cal advantage of the incendiaries. There is
no use being pharisaical about it.

But the outstanding lesson of this fan-
tastic incident is surely that the increasing
friendship between these two great peoples
has become so visible and so exasperating
to all elements which may have other views
as to stir up opposition. The rising tide
has begun to fret the shore. On both sides
of the Atlantic men of light and leading
see more and more clearly that the destinies
of these two English speaking nations are
inextricably intertwined, and that the rude
march of events will compel them to stand
together—back to back, if need be—if their
brand of civilization is to survive. The
Thompsons are only the belated survivors
of a dead and gone antagonism which was
once pretty nearly the universal feeling in
both nations.—Montreal Daily Star.

MA'AM

The editor of The Chapel Hill Weekly
is rejoicing, and right-thinking New Yorkers
will surely rejoice with him, that the
word "ma'am" is not altogether obsolete in
polite society. It is true one hears it seldom,
except from servants and salespeople, and
too often they say "mum," or, worse still,
"modom." The latter group are particularly
fond of "modom." It is plain that they
learned it in the same school that taught
them to say "chick" and to speak haughtily
of "a little import" at $185.

Mr. Graves of Chapel Hill mentioned
gleefully a year ago that he had found a
gentleman of breeding and education in a
Galsworthy novel addressing a lady as
"ma'am." He has just discovered another
in Harpers in a story of Owen Wister's.

His reason for fearing the disappearance
of the word is the imitation of "sophisticat-
ed urban customs and tastes" by the farm
and village. Country people coming to
town and using countrified speech are inti-
midated into copying their city cousins;
sometimes to their own improvement, but
not always.

"Ma'am" is honest and withal a well-
mannered word. It softens a harsh reply,
rounds out a brief "yes" or "no," and makes
a compliment more courteous. If Queen
Victoria was pleased to be addressed so by
Disraeli and Gladstone, modern ladies
should be even more so.—New York Times.