

the next day, interest mounted like wildfire. We had no difficulty securing four new candidates; in fact, we had to pick and choose which out of many applicants the four should be. We selected the ones most popular with the other sex!

By means of the blackboard we offered a prize to any boy who could guess what our club letters stood for. The boys were curious and scornful, and announced sneeringly that "any second-grader could guess that!" But no one ever came forth with the solution.

The night of the initiation we met secretly, after dark, leading our blindfolded candidates, shackled together over devious village by-ways, through the orchard, the barn, the granary, up the back garret stairs, around musty packing boxes, finally to the front door where the "hand of death" greeted them. I touched that hand inadvertently once and nearly jumped out of my skin. It was a kid glove filled with cold wet clay. In the big living room, the victims took the solemn oath of obedience and secrecy and then were given a little taste of what might happen to traitors.

First, they would be branded.

A sharp piece of ice formed letters across their foreheads. All thought it was a genuine sheep branding iron and screamed at the top of their lungs.

Next, all their hair would be cut off!

No one had heard of bobbed hair. Long hair was woman's pride and glory. While an officer grasped one of the candidate's locks, a handful of hair, no doubt filched from some mother's extra puffs or curls, was noisily snipped into small pieces and allowed to fall