The general desire seems to be not to do away with the marks P, C, etc., but to have along with them the per cents. The great beauty of this letter system to the students is, that no exact per cent is set for a pass. That is, if 50 per cent is the pass mark, then a man who gets 49.5 per cent will not fail, as is the case in some colleges. It gives us the advantage of a sliding scale, of which the benefit to us is most apparent. But the great reason why most of the Techs wish their percentages given, is, that there is an idea very prevalent that each student is marked on a separate standard, which is given to him by his professor, and that this is merely an arbitrary standard which exists only in the mind of the professor, and varies with each student. Thus it is supposed that many a man can get a credit on an examination paper which others would get a P or an L on. Why is this? Alas! we are unable to say; but somehow or other the professor gets an idea that a man is not working up to his capabilities, and hence marks him lower than his record deserves. Another man who has shown by his hard work that he is doing all he can, will be helped along and given a higher mark than he has really obtained. Is this fair? Is this just to those other fellows who do not work as hard as they can, to place such a premium on a man’s natural stupidity? It certainly does not seem right to us. And yet such marking as this comes from our marking system. We do not believe that if our per cents were given us along with our other marks, that a professor would dare to mark one man a C, with 70 per cent, and another a P, with 75 per cent. It would look too much like favoritism; and this is a charge which we do not believe that any one of our professors would like to be saddled with.

That this is no made-up story, we know, for we have been repeatedly assured by various professors, that in making up our mark our previous record is always taken into consideration, and that no man is marked on the record of one examination alone. This would seem to be a benefit rather than anything else; but it has been the general experience that a man’s former marks may easily pull him down, but that they never raise his standard by any chance whatsoever. If the plan worked both ways there would be little objection; but it has not been found to do so by the students.

We have hard work here, and plenty of it, but yet we believe that there are but few regular students who do not find some spare time for amusement, or who do not find themselves able to use some of the time allotted for study for some other purpose. That this is a fact we can prove, by asking how many actually put in forty-eight hours of study per week that is assigned by the Faculty. We are willing to wager that there are but very few, not even the men who get nothing but H’s and C’s being entirely included.

Indeed, it would be impossible for a man to keep up such a strain as this for eight months and not break down; and yet what professor is there who will not tell you that you are not doing all you can do and should do, if you inform him that you do not spend the allotted two hours per lesson on his particular branch? That professor will be most apt not to give you the benefit of a doubt when hesitating between two marks to give you. You will be pretty sure to get the lower one. If you should have the courage to ask why your mark was not so high as some one else’s, whom you are positively sure knows no more about the subject than yourself, you will be politely told that the interest you manifested was not sufficient to grant you anything better.

Although percentages cannot entirely do away with an arbitrary standard in the case of each professor, they would undoubtedly lessen the evil, and cause the fellows to be more contented. Some of the ideas among the students concerning their marks may be erroneous, and very possibly are; but if the Faculty wish to do away with any of them, they should explain the whole matter in a straightforward way to us; and if they cannot or will not give us our record in per cents, and prefer to keep us in ignorance of our real standing, at least we would like to know the reason why.