

### The Honor System at the University of Virginia.

IN pursuance of the article published in the first issue of THE TECH on the subject of the honor system at Princeton, the committee in charge wishes to present the following statements concerning that same system, as practiced at the University of Virginia, the first large college to introduce it. The statement was prepared by Mr. R. E. L. Taylor, U. of V. 1901:

"The honor system was established at Virginia in 1842. From that time the conduct of the students, as regards honesty in examinations—and indeed, as concerns honesty and fair play in all matters of student life—has been in the hands of the students themselves. During the sixty-one years of honor system regime, violations of examination pledges have been exceedingly rare. In no case have the members of the Faculty taken action, or figured in any capacity whatsoever, except for their appearance as jurors, in the most recent trial for violation of the honor code, and in this case they acted only after having been earnestly requested to do so by the undergraduate class officers.

This special case (the first one to come up for more than ten years, I believe) illustrates well the way the students carry out the provisions of the system. A brief history of the case may be of interest. I shall therefore write an account of the case as accurately as I can remember or recall the details.

In the Final Examinations of 1901, the suspicious actions of a member of the Medical Class attracted the attention of his classmates. But the actions ceased, and nothing was done that year. But in a Medical Examination held in 1902 the man was seen to act queerly again, and the president and other officers of the class, becoming aroused, determined to watch the man, for it was one of the duties of the class officers to guard the honor of their class. The suspected man left the examination room, was absent, I think, about two hours, during which time he was alone in a college room, and when he returned to the examination seemed to be using a sheet of manuscript (which he had brought back with him) in the answering of the examination questions.

Now, although under the honor system students are allowed the greatest freedom, and go and come from the room, smoke outside, relax themselves by playing baseball for a while, and go to their dining-rooms for dinner and supper (the Final Examinations last from 9 A.M. until you are finished, regardless of whether you choose to take five or fifteen hours on your paper), although, as I say, the men have absolute freedom to do these things, no one, it seems to me, ought to take to his room for three

or four hours during an examination. It is well to put one's self above suspicion. This feeling is a general one, and the students usually go to their meals in twos and threes, or to their rooms with a companion, rather than alone. It was therefore considered strange that the medical student should have gone to a room alone and have stayed there for some time, returning with a sheet of manuscript. The suspicion of the class increased when the man tore up this manuscript into bits, and then handed in his examination paper. The officers of the class, after consultation, felt justified in suspecting the man of cheating. It became their disagreeable duty to collect evidence for and against the man, and the bits of paper manuscript were collected, and seen to be notes on the examination questions. When pasted together they were found to be excerpts from a medical book, and, incidentally, answers to the examination questions.

Other bits of circumstantial evidence were found. The officers felt convinced of the man's guilt, and went to him that night, offering to save him the disgrace of a public trial if he would resign from the University and leave next day. He protested that he was innocent, and refused to resign. The class officers prepared for a public trial, and the matter becoming known about college, the entire University circle became excited by the news. For some time the class prepared its case. During this time the suspected man left college and went home, but did not resign or admit any guilt. He was summoned back for trial by his fellow-students. He came back, and asked, in virtue of the excitement of the student body, which was at fever heat, to be tried by a jury chosen from the Faculty. He also prayed to be allowed to present his defence by counsel.

Both requests, though unusual, were at once granted. I may say here that the men of the Medical Class acted splendidly throughout the trial—they were considerate and kind, but absolutely just. Theirs was not an easy or congenial position.

To make a long story short, the trial convinced the Faculty jury, the student body, and most of the public of the student's guilt. The evidence against him was strong—staggering, even to his best friends. It would take us into law to examine the details of evidence, or the arguments. Suffice it to say that the verdict was "Guilty." The student left Charlottesville, dishonorably dismissed by his classmates. He resigned from all clubs of which he was a member. So far as college is concerned, he is dead. In the South his life is practically blasted. It is hard to say what one of his former friends would do now, were they to meet him on the street.

This ends the history of the case. In conclusion, one question must be answered—how, in the face of the great liberties allowed, is it possible to say whether there are not violations of the system which