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IN CHARGE THIS ISSUE

Edward A. Ash '22 Henry C. Gayley '22

MILTON, MASS., APRIL 25, 1919

THESE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS

COLUMBIA University has replaced the usual college entrance examinations with a series of psychological tests, arguing that it does not particularly matter about a candidate's specific items of information, so long as he is able to think clearly and distinctly. They claim that anyone with a brain capable of functioning without mental agony to its owner, and an average secondary and high school training should be able to pass the tests easily, and with no further demonstration of their ability, should be allowed to take up courses at the University.

The matter of psychological testing of a man's ability is not new. For a number of years it has been employed by numerous large and progressive firms in grading applicants for positions, and in placing them in a relative scale with their fellow employees. Efficiency engineers have claimed great results from such systems. Probably the largest application of the method was the "Trabue Completion Scale" used by the Army in classifying of raw recruits as they reached the cantonments. But like many another innovation attempted by our eagerly progressive military authorities, the scheme was far too vast in conception really to reach a dependable stage before the premature conclusion of the armistice.

Whether these exams will be applicable to technical institutions remains to be seen. There is so much that an engineer must know, and show that he knows, in definite, concise form, that there would appear to be some doubt as to just how far his ability might be scaled by a test of simple generalities. An engineer can think, that must be taken for granted, else he cannot apply the principles he learns in class to the problems that are assigned. Yet would a psychological test that proved his ability to think quickly also prove that if he were given the principle he could easily apply it? There is where the advocates of the system say they have the better form of examination compared to the present commonly existing form.

Students at Technology have recently completed a period of examinations. The general consensus of opinion is that they were hard, very hard. Unquestionably they proved any ability to think, the candidates might have had. Psychological examinations could not have been more conclusive in that respect. Notwithstanding the opinion of some to the contrary the exams certainly could not have been graded in a fairer manner. At other colleges or technical institutions, objections may be raised that the exams are favorable to the grind, the prodigy, while the poor plodder has little or no chance. At these places the passing grade is a fixed and inflexible point. A man either measures up to that standard fixed for years, or he does not.

An entirely different system exists here. The passing grade is a sliding point, dependent on the knowledge and grade of the majority. If the major portion of those being examined receive low grades, the passing mark is automatically lowered. If a candidate cannot register a passing grade with this average passing mark, then the examiners fairly and rightly regard that student with suspicion.

Since the papers are corrected by the section instructors, each student is given individual consideration. The Columbia system

(Continued on top of next column.)

could hardly be more fair to both candidate and examiner.

Still, even as it stands, there is much to find fault with in the present examination system. Of course the ideal way would be to examine each individual as a unit, quizzing him thoroughly on the entire subject—thus finding what he knew as well as what he did not know. Generally selected questions and problems, no matter how carefully they be chosen for their representative qualities, are bound to trip up some men who would pass easily another set of representative problems taken from the same text. It always seems to the student as though he were trying to prove what he knew by showing what he did not know.

It is with this idea in mind that the Columbia experiment is being tried. They want, if possible, to rid entrance examinations of their terror. If this experiment proves a success, the plan will be extended to the whole examination system. The Class of 1922 will do much to establish the truth or the fallacy of the assumption they have made. Opinions of educators and critics vary widely. There are bloated predictions, sanguine and enthusiastic over the scheme. And there are those who say that the experiment will be a rank failure. It is hard to adjudicate the matter one way or the other until more evidence is in. Frankly, it would seem that the plan is not applicable to technical institutions.

COMMUNICATION

The Editor of 'The Tech', Mass. Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Sir: The present system of examinations and quizzes at the Institute undermines the character of perfectly honest men and places a premium on dishonesty. How can you expect an intrinsically honest man to remain honest and receive low grades after hours of hard labor when his less squeamish side partner can receive without effort excellent grades, cribbing to his heart's content, without disapprobation from the student body or punishment from the Faculty? In fact, under the present "honor" system, it would appear that the Student Body and the Faculty are conniving to undermine the morals of these few men who do come to Technology with, scholastically speaking, clean hands and a pure heart. Certainly it cannot be construed otherwise when, in classroom quizzes, the instructor buries his head in a bunch of papers or a book, indifferent to the communications and cooperation of the students. What can be said of the instructor who assigns home work to be done with the explicit instructions that no assistance is to be given or received, yet who nonchalantly observes one student copying another student's work not more than five minutes before the work is due? And then he remarks naively on the innate honesty of the Tech man!

After a year of this, the student is suddenly plunged into the final examinations? Here to crib is no longer the right of the majority but the reward of the daring. In the presence of so many proctors, the question of honesty seems to be omitted altogether. Those without the necessary nerve, their ability to work without assistance weakened by the ease with which they obtained grades in the classroom quizzes, go to the wall.

Final examinations have placed such a premium on grades that they have degenerated into a sport of sports, a gamble with the proctors, with the odds on the proctors' side. The student who cheats and cheats successfully, meets with approbation. "Cs" and smiles from the Faculty, while the poor unfortunate who is caught in the act, like a bankrupt at Monte Carlo, is thrust forth in shame and disgrace; like a man condemned to be hung—"may God have mercy on his soul."

Of course we realize that in so doing Mr. Techman is cheating himself, soothing his conscience, if he has one, with the siren song that all will be well once he grasps his diploma. But, we ask you, is it fair? Is it fair for the Faculty to turn loose on the guileless unsuspecting proletariat a set of thieves with B. S. from M. I. T. engraved on their business cards, as experts in a profession whose watchword is Truth?

Very truly yours, "Veritas."

VOODOO COVER COMPETITION

Quicken thou thy brushes and pens, all ye daubers of the paint and slingers of the ink, for the closing date of the Junior Week cover competition is May 1. The cover will be a deciding factor in the choice of next year's Art Editor.

There should not be more than three colors and black on the poster, the color of the atmosphere in the Voodoo office during discussion is to be eliminated. The poster should be about 16 inches by 22 inches and preferably in black and white, a color chart accompanying the poster to give the colors in their proper places. The color chart need not be full size.

Alumni Notes

LIEUT.-COL. H. M. WAIT '90 of the Engineers Corps, has returned from France and is now with Lord Construction Co., 105 West 10th St., New York city.

WILLIAM B. POLAND '90 Director of the Commission for Relief in Belgium and Northern France, in a letter received March 24, states:

"Our work in the liberated regions of France is still going on hammer and tongs. As far as the feeding is concerned, we shall probably turn this over entirely to the French within three or four months, but the building of temporary barracks for the refugees, and the construction of dispensaries and hospitals in the wrecked regions, child welfare work, etc., will probably go on for some time after that."

RECALLS EVENTS

Mrs. King, Matron of Walker, Relates Experiences

If there is any person connected with the Institute who has any claims as being the one who knows the Institute or its traditions best, or who claims that he knows most Institute men, let him sit up and take notice, for he will have to defend his position stoutly. As far as can be determined, the most worthy aspirant to the honor is Mrs. Ellen E. King, matron at the Walker Memorial, for in the eighteen years that she has spent with the Institute she has learned to know it, its faculty, and its men, better than any one else and can be said to have become an integral portion of it.

So personal and intimate is Mrs. King's knowledge, that the tale of her experience reads almost like an analysis and biography of the persons she tells of. She speaks most familiarly of General Walker, to whom she looks back with the greatest adoration and respect, and tells how he used to come to her counter, when she attended the lunch room at the old Rogers building, and invariably choose mince pie and coffee.

Speaking of Institute spirit in the past as compared with the present, she tells that the present class wranglings are as child's play when compared to the fights and rushes she witnessed in the old buildings across the river. In one of those rushes, Mrs. King relates, there was nothing to be distinguished but a screaming, tearing, writhing mass of humanity and when it threatened to turn into something serious, President Walker came out of his office and pulled a number of fellows out of the mellee, when the mass disappeared as chaff before the wind.

But most of Mrs. King's experiences were pleasanter in character, for she was one to whom students came for advice, and to whom instructors came for opinions of the men, so well acquainted was she with them all. She knew most of the professors when they were still either students or instructors, and fondly recalls her pleasant literary meetings with the students.

She was especially well acquainted with the architectural students, and here's a tip to present members of this course: Mrs. King knows all the problems that are given in the course, and may well be able to advise them about the design of certain structures that are always handed out as pugbears.

Mrs. King's most recent experiences have been in connection with the matronship of the recreation building of the Aviation Detachment at Technology, and now in the same capacity at the Walker Memorial. No wiser choice could have been made for the position, and Mrs. King is now ready to offer her wide experiences and intimate advice to anybody connected with the Institute.

NEW RULES MADE FOR ASSIGNMENT OF ROOMS IN THE WALKER MEMORIAL

The assignment of all rooms in the Walker Memorial for social functions, dinners, and meetings will now be made through the Walker Memorial Committee, as follows. Applications for the use of all rooms which normally are a part of the dining service, that is, the Faculty Dining Room, the North Dining Room, the Grill Room, and the Main Dining Room, will be made directly to Mrs. Scripture whose office is in the Memorial, whether or not dining service is desired. This application will be received by her subject to the approval of the Walker Memorial Committee. This arrangement is made to save as much as possible conflicts of

meetings, and also to prevent complicated arrangements for meetings requiring dining service. Applications for any room in the front of the building will be made directly to the Walker Memorial Committee, either at its office adjoining the East Lounge Room, or may be left with Mrs. King, the matron.

AMERICAN WELDING SOCIETY CHOOSES INSTITUTE MEN

At the first meeting of the American Welding society recently held at the Engineering Society building in New York for the purpose of organization, Professor Comfort A. Adams of the Institute was elected president, and Mr. H. Carlton Forbes '91 was elected secretary.

The society will merge the Welding committee of the Emergency Fleet corporation, the National Welding council, and others who may become interested. The purpose of the society is to become a capable and efficient source of information on welding, not only for the benefit of manufacturers of welding apparatus and supplies, but also to aid those who use welding in their production, or who purchase welded goods. The society will thus tend to stabilize the welding industry and to widen its field.

KAPPA SIGMA CAPTURES TROPHY

The Kappa Sigma Fraternity captured the Interfraternity bowling trophy Tuesday evening by defeating Theta Delta Chi by 52 pins.

LECTURE GIVEN COURSE III MEN

Charles Gilman Talks on the Modern Hammer Drill

Last Friday evening the students in Mining Engineering and Metallurgy assembled to hear one of the country's foremost engineers in the design and construction of mining machinery, Mr. Charles Gilman, chief engineer for the Sullivan Mining Machinery company of Claremont, New Hampshire, who has been instrumental in the development of much of the modern mining machinery, visited Technology with a big case of lantern slides and many models of the latest drilling machines, and gave the future miners many new ideas as to the whys and wherefores of the modern hammer drill, and the steels on the business end of the instrument.

In his lecture Mr. Gilman followed the development of instruments for the cutting of rock from the earliest tools of man, where the cave-dweller patiently scratched away with the mammoth's tusk, to the times when with the turn of the wrist, the pneumatic drill steadily sinks its way into the hardest granite. It was a Boston man who first devised a reciprocating drill. This tool proved itself of little value when tried in boring of the great Hoosac Tunnel, and gave way to the true hammer drill, invented by a Cambridge man, which with a few alterations, is the standard drill of today.

The question as to the best shapes and materials for drill steels had never been investigated until the work was undertaken by the Sullivan Machine company, under the direction of Mr. Gilman. So successful was he, that in one instance they succeeded in boring a two-inch hole with an ordinary hand drill to a distance of thirty feet in solid granite.

FREE COURSES FOR SECOND MATES OFFERED AT INSTITUTE

Schools for engineers are opening new classes for a month's training at Technology, and second mates desiring to advance in grade will receive special instruction free for a term of six weeks at the schools of the United States Shipping Board at Cambridge, Rockland and Portland, Me., and other cities of the country.

The special courses and schools will be open to mariners for advanced instruction, to supply the demand for first mates and first assistant engineers in the merchant marine, where high salaried positions are ready for qualified officers.

To assist men in advancing, the shipping board has ordered its officers training schools to accept, for intensive training, any merchant marine officer and second mates, and second assistant engineers are urged to enroll in the new classes.

The officers of the Technology Aeronautical Society wish to re-emphasize the fact that a table has been reserved in the Walker Memorial main dining hall for the exclusive use of the members of the Society, and those who are interested in the subject of Aeronautical engineering. Any men answering the above description are invited to come to eat at this table, the position of which is clearly marked by a placard.