

## THE TECH

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Monday, February 17, 1908.

The Tech takes pleasure in announcing the election of J. Newell Stephenson 1909 to the position of Associate Editor and of the appointments of Richard H. Ranger 1911 to the News Staff and of George B. Forristall 1911 to the Business Staff.

### MORAL OBLIGATIONS.

It would seem that the Executive Committee is in a hard place, torn between the "moral obligations" to the Copley Society and the moral obligations to the students in deciding on the proposal made to furnish an adequate Union for 1,400 students. It would seem that the Copley Society has the Institute tied up in a financial tangle from which it cannot withdraw, and that the society can practically dictate terms to the Institute as to its withdrawal from a lease which should expire next September.

It would perhaps be well to abate again the rights of the students in this matter, and the duties of the governing body of the Institute toward this third great party of the trinity of bodies that make Technology.

Let us first examine this trinity of bodies, the Faculty, the Alumni, and the Undergraduates. The spirit of the first perhaps typifies the best there is of Technology spirit. It stands always for the highest that Technology stands for. Its spirit was well shown in the Harvard merger question, when this body of men voted against the merger, pledged from their slender salaries a large sum of money to keep the Institute intact, and throughout showed the most courageous spirit.

The second, up to the time of the Harvard merger question, was a more or less disorganized body. This vital question welded the component parts firmly together. Now we have a body, with wonderful thinking leaders, taking part in the administration, financing and advancement of the Institute as is seen in few other institutions in the country.

Let us now turn to the third body, drawing our lessons from a study of the second body. The alumni were more or less disorganized before the Harvard merger question for the same reason that the student body is now disorganized, the life that alumni had led here at the Institute while undergraduates. Back of 1900 there was little to bring the students together socially. There was, however, the saving grace of varsity athletics and small enrollment.

Another significant fact is that the leaders of this alumni body come from classes which were small while at the Institute, offering a greater means of knowing every class-mate as well as every student. Many of the later graduates from the larger classes say that such training as they have in the ordinary intercourse of man with man in the business and engineering world they did not secure while students at the Institute, but after their graduation and in a rather painful manner.

Upon the proper spirit in this trinity of bodies depends the future of the Institute. One is as vital as the other in the healthy growth of any institution. This is recognized by every great educator. Equipment, buildings or endowment count for little if there is not a healthy, democratic universal spirit for the Alma Mater among these vital components of an institution.

That equipment and money count for little without spirit is shown by the standing of many of the big western universities, which are far from the top nationally. The deterioration of the average theological school has come not from deterioration of the Faculty or Alumni but from the poor quality and spirit of the student body. From the President of Tufts College comes the complaint that the academic department in that institution is not advanced

because of the inferior quality of the students through co-education.

Accepted as proven that the undergraduates are a very vital part of an institution it would seem that the governing body of the Institute are under deep moral obligations to the students. Every effort should be made to cement this disintegrated body of individuals, societies and classes into one Technology whole.

Under the present conditions everything militates against the undergraduates offering a united spirit and front. In athletics the class spirit is fostered almost to the extinction of varsity or Technology spirit. The Field Day, admirable as the contest is, excites more feeling and has a larger attendance than any contest between Technology and another college. That this event should continue is not doubted, but there ought to be some influence at work to make class secondary to Institute spirit.

Socially there are the professional societies and the fraternities. The first should foster the student's pride in his profession by association and contact with fellows of his profession and course. Too little is done by these societies for the bringing out of the Institute spirit.

Fraternities even under the most ideal conditions tend toward cliquism. They are, however, recognized by everyone as one of the greatest social factors in American college life. The ideal is of course found at such colleges as are situated in towns where nearly every member of the student body can become a "Greek" and where the "parts" can form a society of their own.

In this respect very peculiar conditions exist at the Institute. At present 26 per cent. of the undergraduates are fraternity members. Not more than 30 per cent. can ever be members of these organizations. A chapter cannot afford to carry too many poor men. Locals, men resident in the suburbs of Boston living at home, are almost impossible.

The fraternity register therefore contains men with a definite income, coming in great part from a distance, and also in great part men who, without these organizations, would have found plentiful opportunities for social relaxation and training. That there is need of such social life and organizations is shown in the rapidly increasing list of the chapters in the last few years. The social problem at the Institute can never be solved by multiplying of fraternities.

Added to the inadequacy of the fraternity to solve the social is the influence of the fraternity at the Institute. The tendency of the fraternity chapter at the Institute is to foster clique spirit, an interest in their own organization.

Something should be done for the remaining 74 per cent. of the student (Continued on page 5)

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