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Charles Rich '26

TECHNOLOGY'S TRADITIONS

THERE is little or no spirit at Technology. There have been many hypotheses offered to explain this lamentable condition. Of these, the most logical is that there are practically no traditions at the Institute. Spirit grows out of common interest. Without traditions, there is no common interest, hence no spirit. Had we the tradition of a successful football team we should all have a common aim, to keep the team going, and it would so weld us together that the spirit we so lack would be developed. We did have a football team once of which we were very proud, but after a time, interest waned and the football team became another of Technology's memories; a fond memory, however.

We have a few traditions. One is Technique Rush. This is an individual contest for an individual prize, and is entered by but a few men, so that it fails completely to bring us together in any large enough sense to be of value. Field Day is somewhat more successful, only the result is not University spirit, but Class spirit. Tech Night, which has followed Field Day for some years, has been abolished, but we do not question the wisdom of this move; nevertheless, we may not be entirely certain that a Push Ball Contest offers the desired substitute. We have a Prize Song Contest, which has been running for three years now and will continue for two more. This contest was instituted to give Technology an official song to replace the Stein Song, which is not original, and is certainly irrelevant. However, the contest has not yet brought forth any song for which the students are willing to sacrifice their present Alma Mater song. In fact, the Stein Song is our oldest tradition.

Many other institutions have an Annual Alumni Day, on which classes are suspended and all undergraduate time devoted to entertaining the visitors, and making them feel once more the old, familiar atmosphere. Besides its value as a tradition, a Technology Alumni Day would have another interest. It would afford a fine opportunity to interest wealthy graduates in new buildings and dormitories, new gymnasiums, swimming pools and such. It would be different from the annual class reunions in June. It would be also a splendid social classic, with a dance and smoker. The alumni would surely welcome such a pleasant way of renewing, if but for a day, their undergraduate memories. Technology could lose nothing and gain much.

We need some new activity which can be so planted and established as to grow into a well rooted tradition. Here is a remarkable opportunity for some genius to bring forth new and original ideas that will work out and accomplish its end; the building of a Technology spirit. There must be some common issue on which we can gain that sympathy of aim, that unity of purpose and ideal that is so conspicuous by its utter absence. There must be some means of doing that which practically every other college or university has succeeded in doing.

The most difficult point is to discover a method or means for filling the existing want. It is for every man to think along these lines and to try to suggest the remedy. Every man must try to establish a common Technology spirit. There is no better way to accomplish this than by cultivating the traditions that we now have, and by making for ourselves new Technology traditions that will bind us more firmly together and make our college days more worth-while.

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ENGINEER

THERE has been, in the past few months, some talk of instituting a compulsory course in Psychology. The question arises as to whether or not this is advisable. There are, at present, a number of required courses that might easily be dispensed with, and for which the proposed course could readily be substituted.

The business of an engineer is to get the best and most economical results out of the machines and materials that he handles. It is then, absolutely essential that he knows his machines thoroughly. Most important of these is men. He must be able to get the most efficiency out of them too.

To be able to fit the proper man to the proper job and to be able to arrange his work and the external conditions surrounding him in a manner to permit him to attain the maximum output are the tasks of every engineer. The human machine engineer is the modern trained psychologist. He understands just what conditions and environment will succeed in enabling this machine to turn out the most efficient work. Then too, we all know that inherent abilities are present in every man. Just as it would be grossly inefficient to employ a huge turbine to drive a sewing machine, or to attempt to run a power plant with a sewing machine

motor, it is ridiculously wasteful to place the human machine in a position for which he is not naturally fitted. The psychologist is able, because of his training, to design and give tests that will readily locate the man best fitted to successfully undertake any task. In the army, these tests, called Vocational Tests, were rather successful in finding men for certain specialized activities. They should be so in any plant or factory.

In view of the fact that nearly every engineer is as much concerned with the handling of human as well as mechanical machines, the projected course in Psychology should prove to be of great practical value and if possible should be given to all embryo engineers.

COMMUNICATION

To the Editor:

I have, of late, been following the series of communications in The Tech dealing with—and incidentally misinterpreting—the Brown Baggers. I cannot help but marvel at the complete irrelevancy of some of the criticisms made. It is sad that the general comprehension is so low as to give rise to such errors in interpretation.

In the first place, the communication, written by G. W. Daybert, which appeared in Monday's Tech, well illustrates the point which I wish to make. Aside from being a worthy contemporary of the Voo Doo's worst, in point of humor, the letter clearly demonstrated that the author thereof is rather mistaken as to what is really meant by a Brown Bagger, and also, that he misconstrued some of the ravings of his predecessors in the communication column. Mr. Daybert seemed to think that these correspondents placed a student in his particular class or group simply because of the manner in which he carried his books to the Institute. This is not so. A Brown Bagger is not simply a man who goes through the halls of the building with a brown Boston bag in one hand. It would be just as sane to classify mentalities on the basis of the color of shoes worn or the direction of stripe in a neck-tie. How absurd. A Brown Bagger is a man who studies too much! That is the only lucid definition. Even this definition must be somewhat limited. It is not the man who merely studies too much, but the student who spends too much time on his lessons in comparison to the time spent on other things. It is not simply study alone—but lack of other interests too that makes a Brown Bagger and a Boor. This may be expressed mathematically as: the man whose "interest quotient" is too low, lower than some popular standard, is a Brown Bagger. By "interest quotient" I mean his outside interests divided by his scholastic interests. From this ratio it can be seen that to either increase the scholastic interests—the denominator—or decrease the outside interests—the numerator—the quotient will fall below the safety mark and the man may be classed as a Brown Bagger. However, by increasing both numerator and denominator proportionately a man may study more without incurring the remotest possibility of becoming a Brown Bagger.

Here then, is the one big mistake which is being made: a man may study a great deal without becoming a Boor, if he keeps pace with his study by doing outside things. This Boor is the person who knows nothing at all aside from what he has gleaned from his books and from his lectures. He alone can be justly termed a Brown Bagger and a Boor.

However it is up to the other men not to ridicule him, but to help him naturally to see the folly of his ways and emerge from his own small shell. This cannot be accomplished by sneering or by calling him names which are entirely inapplicable. Fortunately, there are but few Boors.

In summing up what I have said, I wish to make my meaning absolutely clear. Here is what I am driving at. It is the Boor who is the Brown Bagger. The man who carries a Brown Bag or who studies is not necessarily a Boor. All that counts is the "interest quotient."

(Signed) H. Sictin '26.

Play Directory

ARLINGTON: "Going Up." Musical comedy. Marred by inexperience of company.
COLONIAL: "Music Box Revue." Too good to miss.
COPELY: "Secrets." A comedy.
HOLLIS: "The First Year." Last week.
PLYMOUTH: "You and I." Harvard prize play, with H. B. Warner.
ST. JAMES: "The Alarm Clock." Reviewed in this issue.
SELWYN: "Stella Dallas." Extra matinee Friday.
SHUBERT: "Up She Goes." Last week.
TREMONT: "Zander the Great." Last week or comedy with Alice Brady.
WILBUR: "The Dancers." Comedy.

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The Lounger does not profess to be much of an athlete or an acrobat, but just the same he has been considering buying a pair of stilts as the only logical means of conveyance around the campus during the spring periods of mud and mud-puddles. The warm weather this week has softened up the grounds to some extent, but the Lounger hates to think of the really mild days to come in April.

Stilts. Imagine the Faculty wending their way up from Kendall Square, trying gracefully to preserve their poise high in the air, their heads necessarily bowed to prevent their scrapping against the telephone wires, their eyes dizzily beholding the ground so far below them, their hats pulled down over their ears to lessen the chances of having to descend to the mucky pools of congealed terra firma below because of the impoliteness of a mischievous wind.

The Lounger can picture a long line of high suspended individuals, all of quaint and "Who Says?" fame, carefully picking their way through the seas of mud below. Slowly and with much speculation, they lift the right stilt and withdraw it from the quicksandish, saturated earth. Automatically it is advanced over another span of 50 or 100 feet, and the owner of the leg peers into the ground to see if he is stepping on a rock. Timidly but romantically he lowers the stilt into the unknown strata beneath the surface. Down, down, down, slides the trusty support much like a pile river in its performance, until suddenly it stops with a jerk. Bottom. With an air of reassurance, and stimulated by the confidence that the rock stratum underlying the sands of the ancient river bed still possesses its characteristic supporting strength, the professor overhead bravely proceeds to take another step.

Stilts. Imagine the co-eds—but here the Lounger remembers an old saying that discretion is the better part of valor, and though he would like to prove his courage, he leaves it to the reader's imagination to picture a scene analogous to the above, but with a different cast playing the role of the Faculty.

And then there is the student. Bless his dignity. The Lounger could not forget him. Here the whole act is left

WHO SAYS?

The quotations for today are:

1. "You can find this on the second line of the third paragraph, page 200."
2. "The problem for today is . . ."
3. "Smaller than any value you wish to assign, however small."

The answers to the last three quotations are:

1. Dr. R. H. Gerke: "This reaction can be explained if we calculate the Free Energies."
2. Prof. H. W. Hayward: "You mean you don't understand the theory."
3. Prof. C. S. Robinson: "Is that right, McCabe?"

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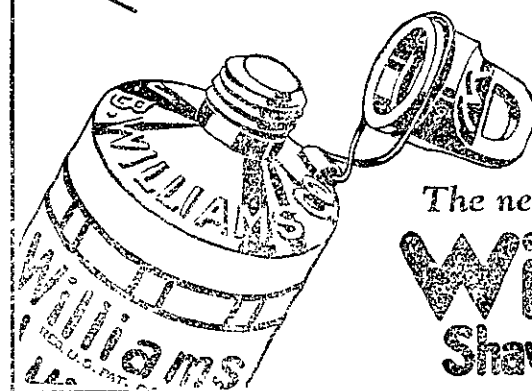
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