

# Penn State Collegian

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News Editor this issue F. P. GEORGE

## IS MEDIOCRITY A CRIME?

Mediocrity, bugaboo of progressive Americanism, is found in all walks of life. Excusable in some cases, it is entirely inexcusable in others. For, while it is evident that not all people are endowed with the same capacities in the particular line in which they are engaged, it is equally true, nevertheless, that too many individuals are content with work of an inferior quality when, by extending themselves without undue effort, a greatly superior grade of work might be produced.

But mediocrity, as it exists in the outside world, is not of particular interest to college students. It is in connection with this evil, with its attending and resulting influences, as it applies to undergraduate life at American institutions of higher learning that student interest is aroused.

There is a tendency toward mediocrity, it would seem, in all lines of collegiate endeavor. But it is not without cause. There is not enough competition in undergraduate activities. And where competition is in evidence, it is usually not spirited enough for the production of exceptional results. Individuals working for student positions of honor, trust or influence on a competitive basis, seem content with mediocre work, some because they themselves are mediocre, others because they are not required to extend themselves.

To those undergraduate competitors in whose ordinary work are seen their best efforts, much credit must be given. But upon those individuals, capable of greater things, who are simply content to drift with the tide, much discredit must be reflected. "To give a little better than his best should be the motto of every man" says Coach Hugo Bezdek. And what an immense amount of good would result if college men were out to regard such an expression seriously.

Debating, dramatics, music, journalism, in fact all lines of collegiate activity are suffering because of mediocre work turned out by participants. Debating, to cite a specific example, is one of the oldest forms of intercollegiate competition and is generally recognized as an activity productive of exceptional returns. Yet each year witnesses instructors in the forensic art combating a proposition arising from a mediocre expenditure of efforts.

But there is another phase to be considered in the discussion of mediocrity. Year after year men go through college, men of superior intelligence and ability, without even trying out for any undergraduate activity, for some of which they are oftentimes peculiarly fitted. It is a safe estimate that there are men in college today who are better qualified to fill the positions of honor and influence on the campus than the individuals who are, at present, in such positions. It is unfortunate that such is the case, but it is none the less true. It represents a distinctive loss to the college and to the individual.

Lack of confidence may occasion non-participation,—that and laziness. But confidence can be acquired, and work is the most effective remedy for that "tired feeling." It is essential that every undergraduate interest himself in some activity independent of his scholastic routine. And then, when interested, it is only fair to his college and to himself "to give a little better than his best."

## MAKE IT 100 PERCENT

Last night witnessed the official opening of a campaign inaugurated to secure new students' interest in the two million dollar campaign for health and welfare buildings at Penn State. It is hoped that this campaign may be productive of results in proportion to the merit of the cause which it is promoting. For then one hundred percent participation would be assured.

And that, by the way, is the goal of the present drive among first year men,—one hundred percent participation. Nor is the goal too high in the opinion of men who have worked indefatigably in the promotion of this great project since President Thomas and his associates first set the wheels of progressive thought and action in motion. Students can not afford to pass up a share in Penn State. It is not good business, to say nothing of the moral obligations involved.

Modern teachings, based upon hundreds of years of experience, emphasize the fact that happiness is dependent upon both giving and receiving. Penn State is giving to each and every one of her sons and daughters, who care to avail themselves of the opportunities presented, a heritage that can never be repaid in full. Where, then, is the man who would refuse so great a benefactor in this, her hour of need? Truly, such an individual is not a Penn State man.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Primarily a student publication for and by the students, and the interests of Penn State, the Collegian is dependent upon everyone connected with the College in any way whatsoever in ensuring its purpose more successful and continuously better. The Collegian therefore offers its columns for any student comment concerning the campus affairs, an opportunity for individual expression. All criticisms and suggestions for the benefit of the publication itself are also earnestly solicited from our subscribers.

## Thoughts of Others

### BE ABLE TO TALK (THE DAILY ILLINOIS)

The University of Illinois has an astonishing lack of outstanding men who can stand on their two feet and say something straight from the shoulders and in a convincing manner before an audience. This fact is only too evident when the attempt is made to find students to talk at conventions and other student meetings. This fact is deplorable.

A man is certainly not able to go out into the world and make his best mark until he is able to talk before an audience. There comes a time in the life of every man when he is called upon to either instruct others or to tell his own experiences or at least to be able to talk convincingly and convincingly. Too often men in professional life have found themselves unable to do this and they have suffered accordingly.

Courses in public speaking help solve the problem to some extent but they merely scratch the surface in too many cases. The student merely takes on semester or one year of the work and in so doing gets only the rudiments of the art and unless he keeps up his practice, he is not to find himself floundering about in a most wretched manner when called upon.

What we are getting at is the fact that the solution of all this is practice. Anything that sets a man upon his feet before an audience is good for him and gives him just an ounce more of self-confidence and pulse for the next time. That is the reason why we believe that debating is good. We are not usually debating, inter-college debating and even inter-city debating. It is such a thing could be the practice in a good many houses of making a man get on his feet when talking in house meetings is a good one. The other fellows look at him and he is strengthened a bit. To talk, talk, talk, is the only way that a man will ever learn to do it easily and well.

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## Facts and Figures

### THE LIBRARY

The Library is the oldest of Penn State's permanent institutions. Before Old Main was begun, in the annual report of 1837, an acknowledgment is made of gifts of books, these being listed in the American Agriculturist of January, 1878. The second annual report, that of 1878, gives an inventory of all the property of the Farm School and at this time the Library was valued at \$190. Books on farming, fruit, chemistry, mathematics, surveying and natural philosophy comprised the titles. Historians are justified in considering the year 1837 as the date of the founding of the Library, the same year in which the purchase of mules and horses made quite an era and a matter of

great encouragement to labor. The first catalogue, that of 1859, speaks of the Library as one of the auxiliaries to study, terming it a place "containing over two thousand volumes embracing the most important of the American and Foreign encyclopaedias." The catalogue also spoke of the number constantly increasing but either the increase was not realized or the number was over-estimated. For 1870 to 1876, the Library is said to contain about fifteen hundred volumes, the number again reaching "about two thousand volumes" in 1878.

In 1881, the Library contained three thousand volumes, in 1886, about four thousand and in 1891, seven thousand volumes and in 1896, about ten thousand five hundred volumes. In 1894 when the Carnegie building was occupied, the number of volumes had reached twenty-one thousand. In 1914, the number was forty-six thousand three hundred and in 1924 by the end of the present academic year the number will be about sixty thousand.

The fact that there were two societies, the Crozer and the Wash-

ington (two hundred and fifty dollars having been granted by the Board of Trustees) accounted for the slow growth of the Library during the early years. These societies were suspended in 1896 and many of the books were added to the Library. The history of the Library has been conveniently divided into three periods: first, the period of incubation from 1837 to 1874 when no librarian was in charge and books were carried by users, chiefly members of the faculty; second, the period of supervision and regulation from 1874 to 1890 when Professors W. A. Buckhout, Arthur Grabowski and Charles Reeves, together with student assistants, kept the Library open from one to six hours a day; and third, the period of organization from 1890 to 1921. During this last period the Library was first classified by Miss Pennell, a graduate of the New York State Library School and other librarians who served during this period were Miss Allen from 1889 to 1894, Miss H. M. Bradley from 1894 to 1904 and Edwin W. Runkle from 1904 to 1921.

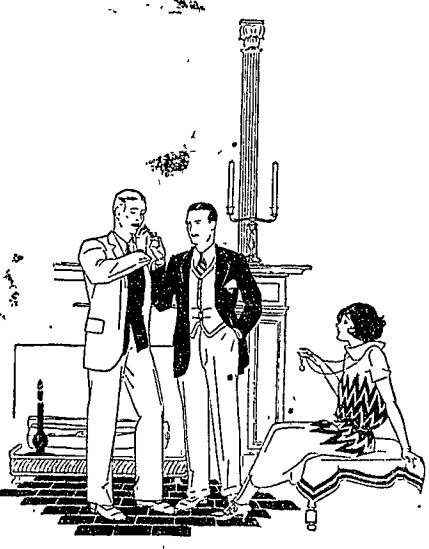
During the twenty years of service of the present librarian, Dr. Runkle the Library has quadrupled in number of volumes and the staff has trebled. In this latter period, periodical and reading rooms have been opened. The chief donations to the Library are the Atherion Akove and Memorial Tiftlet given by the class of 1907, the Heave Akove of Pennsylvania History and an endowment by General James A. Beaver and the Library Clock, presented by the class of 1910.

The Library is greatly congested and it is hoped that in the near future, the stacks will be enlarged, the main reading room enlarged by removing useless bookshelves and an additional room provided for a reference room, a periodical room and a reserve book room.

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