

# The Tar Heel

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Saturday, November 13, 1926

## COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

This, the second of a series of editorials on the different divisions of the University, is based on the findings of a symposium of commendatory and condemnatory criticism which were written by representative students in the different departments of the College of Liberal Arts.

This division is generally recognized as being the best in the University. Its library and professors are, in toto, better. Its students, however, contribute anything from dunderheads to brilliant scholars. It prepares a student to do nothing, least of all be satisfied with life in general. He may teach school or he may specialize after graduation. Students have no right to expect an education in practicalities from so sketchy a course.

This is a time of questioning, an age of investigation, and an era of analysis. It is no uncommon thing for one to seek and search for enlightenment on every subject under the sun. Everything that we have as an accepted tradition, or as an established principle has come in for its share of analysis with the hope that we might further the knowledge and the happiness of the world. Thus our present educational system has come beneath the microscopic eye of the critical public, and at last to the specialist in investigation, the college student.

The College of Liberal Arts is nothing more than a series of courses intended to give the student an education in a broad and comprehensive way. It aims to familiarize the student with the problems of life, and of human relations, to create or develop

within him an ability to reason or to think. Any unbiased mind will have of necessity to admit that it has made a meager beginning toward a realization of that aim; this spirit of questioning on the students' part is an indication of that much at least. Beyond that one can say little in its behalf except in an abstract and fairly indefinite way. Then what is wrong? We spend enough, we study a part of the time, we have an optimistic self-satisfaction in believing that we are being educated.

Full of the belief that he is to be an educated man and that the University is going to broaden and polish and thus fit him to face the serious duties of life, the average high school graduate comes here too young and unintelligent to know what he even wants to do as a life work. Before he realizes what it is all about he has been led by an irresistible magnetism to Memorial Hall, herded with eight hundred others like himself into a hurried registration. Some mechanical nonentity, some Ph.D., A. B., or B. S. who believes that all men less in the scale of rank than they, are "dumb-bunnies," "know-nothings," or "so many sheep led here to be skinned, and that skin handed back" and who has as little interest in men as would a meat grinder gives the freshmen his first introduction to a "Liberal Education" in a very half hearted and disinterested way. This snobbish superiority follows through the four years with only a few notable exceptions. The required work is stale, mechanical and colorless. Quite the opposite ought to be true, especially so with freshmen who come here with romantic illusions and helplessness. Add to this the fact that all of the average freshman's work is taught by a mechanism in human form, that often squeaks and is in much need of lubrication with the milk of human kindness, and you have the foundation of many crimes of life hidden under the guise of an education.

Few professors are educators; fewer of them are in any sense personalities; most of them are Phi Beta Kappa men, full of overflowing with a supply of facts—that's all. There is too much mechanical, too much that can be taken from text books without the professors, and to make one want to attend college, especially the College of Liberal Arts. Most men who are here today in that school are after a diploma and not an education, or a knowledge of human problems and their solution.

One student says: "In three history courses that I have had, the 'prof' has rigidly stuck his nose into the pages of the text and in a conversational tone 'lectured' (from the text that I had read the night before) believing that he was duping us into a belief that he was actually thinking out what he said. Not once during these courses—the same is true with others—did the professors strike one note of color, or say one word of imaginative, creative thinking." Edward Aswell writing in the November Forum says it admirably: "The modern college professor is a specialist. He keeps his nose glued to a microscope. If his subject is history, he delves in the dust of ages, grubs about among yellow, tattered parchments, and gathers up the dry bones of the past. And too often passes them on to the students—dry bones, that's all. A successful teacher of history must pass on something more, must possess something of the skill of the artist who takes a fragment of the frieze of the Parthenon and, by imbibing the spirit of this fragment, restores it to some semblance of their first perfection. Lacking

this skill the scholar converts history into mere antiquarianism."

One contributor says: "Zoology is life; it is closely connected with every day problems. Yet not once during two courses have either of two justly famous men struck one word of interest, or helped us to get any more than the coldest of technicalities. How have these helped us to meet the problems of life, to mingle with people, or to know ourselves? The same is true with the present psychology courses. The same is positively true with philosophy. If half the stuff that is poured in lump form into the heads of college men were digested and made to be real, workable, and human, then given in some sort of an intelligent way to HUMAN BEINGS, we'd soon have value in an A. B. degree.

"Of Chemistry one, two, thirty-one, thirty-two, and thirteen, only the latter has had the least bit of 'Liberal Education' worth. One and two were given by learned doctors, men of no mean recognition as chemists; but they lectured in a monotone from a text that was supposed to have been read the night before. They were bored to fits by having to talk in language that was understandable. Teaching, lecturing, and talking to the students was to them a mechanical process. The students got a few facts, spent three months, many dollars and received just what they could have sat in their rooms in Guam and learned without the handicap of a bore."

Concerning the students who take history and government, lucky are those who are assigned to the sections taught by real teachers. A few of the professors are yearly allotted to history 1 and 2 in order to save the courses from complete disgrace. Under the instruction of these men the freshman, should he be inclined to a study of the past, gets a very good start. He is not antagonized by relentless driving and pedantic treatment, though he suffers the aches of the semi-monthly quizzes.

Why is it that discipline of study must be instilled through frequent tests? Imagine a freshman's inspiration to hard work when he finds that the very man who harps on labor is above the giving and correcting of quizzes. What we need most is more precept, more humanity and less dogmatism. But perhaps our finite minds do not understand the ways of the mighty and the hardships they put in our way as a part of the process of disillusionment.

Let this be said of the Department of History by the way of commendation: its series of advanced electives qualify it as the best planned and best taught division in the University. Of course there are some criticisms of these courses, but for the most part they are aimed at some little eccentricity of the professor and not at his general qualifications to teach or at the inherent merits of the subjects. Let the student overlook complacency in one, serenity and dogmatism in another, and a propensity for cracking pointless jokes in still another; let him pass over a general air of languor in his tutors; let him study hard; and let him try to get an education.

The Department of Government, listed in the catalogue as one with the History Department, until last year had been in a state of suspended animation. Prior to last fall there was not a single all time man devoting his time exclusively to the teaching of government. It had been more or less a side issue of overworked history professors. Consequently, it received so little attention that in last year's catalogue there were blanks instead of names under three courses in municipal govern-

ment. It seems that the logical thing to do is to separate the Department of Government from the Department of History and have several men devote their time exclusively to the government division and place more emphasis on its importance. Such is not impossible and it would be a welcome innovation.

There seems to be a woeful lack of source books for American history. History 7 is characterized as being one of the extremely few real university courses under a real university professor, who lets his students teach themselves while he acts the part of an excellent professor. The whole department is to be commended for its inclusion of notable professors and writers.

The Department of English is undoubtedly one of the highest "raters" in the University. The bane of too many instructors who are barely graduates is detrimental to the department. The loss of Greenlaw and the late T. S. Graves seems to be irreplaceable. There are several men in the department who delight in unreasonable tactics, thereby scaring many students out of majoring in English. The department lost an excellent professor when Mr. Hibbard was made dean. This erudite, popular man now has to devote too much of his time to his office duties and his writings. Another liminary is the well-liked, modern, reasonable Mr. Jones, who lets students conduct courses under his supervision.

The one-man Department of Journalism functions as well as can be expected under its limited conditions. Instead of giving four and one-half courses, at least eight courses should be offered, which would allow students to major in journalism. This would attract many more students to this department. Many of the large universities and colleges do not offer journalism at all, but those that do give more courses than are given here. Columbia offers 61 courses and 9 professors, West Virginia 10 and 1, Washington and Lee 7 and 1, South Carolina 13 and 2, Ohio State 21 and 3, Georgia 11 and 2. Professor Coffin is now working on a plan to enlarge the department here.

One man tells of his experience in English one, under a human being, a man capable of teaching, not a Ph. D., one who has some color, much imagination, and a personality (rare indeed). But what good did it do. Poor thing, his individuality, his personality, all that he could have, and would have done, were ruled out; he followed an "instruction sheet," got off so much "required work," so many themes, and pages of the text. Just the opposite was true of the teacher across the hall. He is a nobody, dumb, except for an ability to learn facts, has no personality, or any degree of intuition or initiative; yet he was as successful a teacher as Mr. Soandso. He covered as many pages of the text!

So,—after all this rambling along, all the tirade on College professors, teaching systems, and mechanisms, one might summarize it all by the deduction that "An A. B. education at present secures one the satisfaction of a diploma." One might add that the long list of professors who have allowed the students to be exposed to them contains only a few who have been personalities, men of contact, or who have any of the prerequisites of the profession, except a few facts,—dry bones.

Our plea is for men who are alive, men who live, men who see the beauty of life, and have the ability to pass on these

things to us as students seeking them, as teachers. (Professors Hibbard, Woodhouse, and Lane are cited as notable examples.) Choose men to teach who are human beings, not machines, men who are capable of thought, and who do things. Pick men as teachers for the A. B. School who want their graduates to have more than a diploma, but also all that is supposed to signify. The chief fault with our present conglomeration of "teachers" is that they are too deplorably self-satisfied. Too much work is prescribed, required, necessary to an A. B. Where is there room for self-expression, development of personality, any contact with human problems, mingling with human forces? Surely text books are necessary, but why not augment these with professors that see more than the print upon the pages?

### LAST CALL FOR APPOINTMENTS

The Yackety Yack photographer will make his last trip before Christmas next week. Now is a good time to have your picture taken before the reduced rates go out of existence. Make appointments at Sutton and Alderman's any afternoon from one to three o'clock.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

**Today**  
U. N. C. Freshmen vs. Maryland Freshmen, Emerson Field. 2:30.  
**Sunday Nov. 14**  
5:00 p. m.—Organ Recital by Mr. H. D. Phillips, of Pinehurst, at the Chapel of the Cross.  
**Monday Nov. 15**  
8:00 p. m.—A.A.O.U.P. meeting in Social Rooms of the Chapel of the Cross.  
8:30 p. m.—Joint meeting of Y. M. C. A. Cabinets Y. M. C. A.  
**Tuesday Nov. 16**  
7:00 p. m.—Phi Assembly, Manning Hall.  
7:15 p. m.—Di Senate, Di Hall.

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### AT THE CHURCHES

**BAPTIST.**  
Eugene Olive, Pastor.  
9:45 a. m. Sunday School. Student classes conducted by Dr. A. C. Howell and R. B. Lane.  
11:00 a. m.—Morning Sermon: "The Marks of Jesus."  
6:45 p. m.—B. Y. P. U.  
7:45 p. m.—Evening Sermon: "I Go a-Fishing."

**CHRISTIAN.**  
B. J. Howard, Pastor.  
9:45 a. m. Sunday School.  
11:00 a. m. Morning Sermon.  
7:00 p. m.—Christian Endeavor.  
8:00 p. m.—Evening Service.

**ROMAN CATHOLIC.**  
Mass held on the first and third Sundays of the month in the Y. M. C. A. at 8:30 a. m., conducted by Father O'Brien, of Durham.

**METHODIST.**  
Walter Patten, Pastor.  
9:45 a. m. Sunday School.  
11:00 a. m.—Morning Sermon.  
7:45 p. m.—Evening Sermon, by Rev. W. R. Royal, of Washington, N. C.  
6:45 p. m.—Epworth League.  
Rev. M. T. Workman, "Martin Luther."

**PRESBYTERIAN**  
W. D. "Parson" Moss, Minister.  
9:45 a. m. Sunday School.  
11:00 a. m. Morning Sermon.  
7:00 p. m.—Christian Endeavor.  
8:00 p. m. Evening Sermon.

**CHAPEL OF THE CROSS**  
A. S. Lawrence, Rector  
8:00 a. m.—Holy Communion.  
9:45 a. m. Sunday School.  
10:00 a. m. Student Bible class conducted by A. D. Milstead.  
11:00 a. m.—Morning Service.  
6:45 p. m.—Young Peoples League.  
7:45 p. m.—Evening Service.

Mr. S. H. Hobbs and Paul W. Wager, both of the Department of Rural Social Economics are attending a conference of the American Country Life Association at Washington, D. C. They will return to Chapel Hill Sunday.

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