

The Daily Tar Heel

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Friday, February 19, 1932

Even the Navy Defies Free Speech

The Navy Department, hardly bothered by the sentiment of the public toward the reduction of armaments or by governmental budgets presumably imposed as a measure of restraint, has continued its gigantic building; and its newest and most favored child is, of course, the U. S. S. Akron, that elephantine dirigible which the public will soon be able to see floating in the air in compensation for the payment of taxes.

This extended balloon, despite its sensationalism and record-breaking size, has been the object of serious charges which the Navy Department, in its customary manner, has denied, its refutation taking the character of childish debate by its "taint so" answers to the charges. It seems that a construction engineer and a mechanic, impelled by more than chauvinistic motives, made the disconcerting statement that the Akron was poorly constructed, her frame having defective metal and being loosely riveted together. This presumed fact would make the dirigible entirely ill-fitted for use, and incidentally, since this contingency has been completely minimized by the navy boys, greatly endanger the lives of her crew. Her commander, in reassuring disproof, says that the Akron "is the best ship ever constructed." The Navy, furthermore, sorely vexed by such unfounded charges, and to uphold the "honor" of her service, has fired the two workers.

Doubtless, the charges are untrue. Yet if the character of the navy autocrats is any criterion for the quality of her too-many war machines, then, at the least, the charges deserved formal inquiry in the true sense of the word, not direct "no" but a convincing detailed and technological disproof. The two men, who were hardly motivated by self-gaining desire, unless it was in the form of publicity, deserved the opportunity to defend themselves and thereby prove their charges rather than being summarily dismissed.

Apparently the Navy believes

that courage in her service should only be shown when the bombs are bursting; and that critical comment is a form of treason not even justifying a fair court-martial. What they further believe is to build more, better and larger, warships.—G. B.

A Bachelor of Arts In 1350 Days

The degree of Bachelor of Arts from an American college has become something of a joke to-day. In too many cases a boy attends college for four years, carefully selects the courses which will give him the requisite number of credits with the least amount of effort, and leaves perhaps vaguely "broadened" by his study but with no deeper vision and no trustworthy and accurate knowledge in any field. The University of North Carolina has led the way among Southern schools in measures to make the A. B. mean more, such as the comprehensive examinations; but even here it is difficult to obtain from the mapped out course of study the broad cultural development which it is the true purpose of the College of Liberal Arts to impart.

Work of true university grade, which is to foster that broad cultural development, must be fairly advanced. Surely there is very little of science in the study of the rudiments of a language or science. These intellectual tools must be mastered before the student can begin university work. When he enters the College of Liberal Arts he should have a sufficient mastery of the elementary facts of the various humanities and broader relationship to life.

However, when a student enters an American college, especially a Southern one, he rarely has that knowledge. The state universities in particular must admit practically any holder of a state high school diploma. And the high schools of this and other states simply do not prepare adequately for university work. The average graduate of a North Carolina high school has as his intellectual equipment a hazy knowledge of English grammar and spelling which may or may not enable him to write correct sentences, rarely a passable knowledge of a foreign language, little mathematics beyond simple algebra and often none too firm a grip on that, a sketchy knowledge of American history and almost none of European, a speaking acquaintance with the literary masterpieces of the world, and the barest rudiments of a natural science. With this background it is utterly impossible for him to attempt any advanced work.

The first two years of his college course are spent in an effort to prepare him for college work. He is merely drilled in the rudiments of grammar, two foreign languages, history, mathematics, literature, and a science. In the remaining two years of his stay in college he must get his university education. He has time for only eighteen courses, and at least twelve of those must be spent in his major and minor. Almost no time is left for that broad study which he is supposed to pursue. He has scant opportunity to take the many tempting courses in philosophy, sociology, science, and literature which the catalog describes. It is utterly impossible in the brief time he has for university work for a student to gain the breadth and depth of learning and the power of thinking which an A. B. should represent.

A twelve-year preparatory course in place of the present eleven-year course would help matters a great deal, but it seems now that the total number of class-days spent in grammar and secondary schools will be lessened rather than increased.

The only other remedy is to require five years of work for an A. B. The first year and a half or two years could be spent, as at the present time, in preparatory work. Then the student would have three or three and a half years before him in which to do his university work. He would have time to get a satisfactory mastery of his chosen field of study and could get that broad background of literature, art, history, social studies, science, and philosophy which is essential to a true education. The A. B. today represents little more than a hasty cramming of facts, more or less digested, in one field, and a smattering of several other studies. If another year were added to the course, the A. B. could mean a really adequate knowledge of one subject and a good general grasp of the whole field of learning.—D.M.L.

Crooks Cut Their Own Throat

An honor system will only be an honor system in so far as the students concerned will feel that what they do is honorable and for their own best good. It is up to the students themselves to enforce every point of the system or to let certain points slide. The majority of the students feel that it is wrong to cheat on examinations, and, consequently, they do not cheat; but they do not necessarily feel it their honorable duty to report every violation of the honor system which they use.

How many students are here for an education, and how many for a degree? If a student is here for an education it does not matter, to him, what grade he makes on a course. If he is here for a degree it makes no difference to him how much he learns about the subject matter of a course; all that he wishes is that on the records of the university he is given credit for successfully passing the certain amount of work required for a degree. Now, what does it matter to the student who is trying to get something out of the courses he takes what another man, who is only trying to get credit on those courses, will do to obtain that credit? So on the surface it looks like there would be no reason, beneficial to the sincere student, to report the dishonorable one.

The sincere student does wish to get a degree; so he can hardly consider the self-satisfaction he gets from knowing he learned enough about a course to suit his own wishes to compensate for a "flunk." Yet there may have been enough cheaters in his class to reduce his average until it was below the mythical line which separates a "flunk" from a "pass," and it is certain that every cheater lowers the average of the class and thus lowers the grade of the sincere student.

This University is maintained by the state for the purpose of giving to those who desire it a college education. It is not maintained to give those who wish it the doubtful honor of having credit for the required amount of work for a degree. A sincere student cannot tolerate, for the sake of his university and himself, a cheater. And the honor system will be completely successful when the sincere student will feel that it is to his own good to see that it is enforced.—R.M.F.

Brief Facts

Oxford university is said to have been founded by King Alfred in 872.

E. E. Peterson, leader of a University of Michigan expedition, has announced a huge official granary used by the Roman government of Egypt in the second century A. D.

With Contemporaries

Our Diplomats

The appointment, by President Hoover, of Andrew W. Mellon, until then Secretary of the Treasury, as ambassador to Great Britain has attracted a great deal of comment throughout the country. The choice may or may not have been a wise one; at least Mr. Mellon has had a great deal of experience that will probably be of value to him in his new field.

The point is this: Why a new? Why is there not a man in the diplomatic service who has been trained in the intricate maneuvers of international relations and of caliber requisite to fittingly represent the United States as Ambassador to the Court of St. James! Certainly there is such a man. Mellon may be a brilliant man, a gentleman of the first water, and one of the world's greatest financiers, but that does not qualify him to compete with experts in a field in which he is a rank tenderfoot.

The committee which President Hoover sent to represent the United States at the Geneva conference is a glorious example of this ridiculous practice. The members were all fine people but not diplomats! What chance will they have against the trained and experienced diplomatic corps of England, France, Japan, Germany, Italy, and others equally prepared?

A definite step forward in this field was taken when Joseph G. Crew, a thoroughly trained and competent diplomat, was made ambassador to Japan.—*V. M. I. Cadet.*

Research

What with everything from the average thickness of Arabian horse-hair to the number of times Burns mentions the word "auld" in his writings coming in for extensive treatment through the direction of intellectually stagnant professorial councils all over the country, we thought that the end of all significant research had come. Each time we glanced over a list of University research topics for a new year we sighed sadly and then uttered a few abacabras

Two Cent Stamp Only Requisite For M. A. At De Pauw, Until 1874

Alumna Received Degree Probably Because Marriage Was "Intellectual Pursuit."

What's in a degree?

For many years, candidates for Master's degrees have been familiar sights walking about the University campus like human libraries, or diligently studying old, faded manuscripts late at night. Apparently, they were born sixty years too late.

Until 1874 De Pauw university, Greencastle, Indiana, would send any alumnus or alumna a Master's degree for a two-cent stamp, three years after graduation, if he or she were following intellectual pursuits, according to Dr. Henry B. Longden, vice-president of the institution, in an article in the *De Pauw Alumni News*. Dr. Longden revealed that he acquired his degree for two cents.

Just what was considered an "intellectual pursuit" is uncertain. An alumna who was married on the night of her graduation was awarded her master's degree, probably on the grounds that marriage was an intellectual

in the hope that some kind genius would rise up and offer something worth the consideration of so many learned minds. But nothing happened, and each year the list of topics has become worse.

No longer need universities worry about research topics now, however, for we have discovered a mind which is admirably suited to the business of finding new research topics. On Sunday, as we pursued our newspaper, we happened upon a few lines of print which have almost changed our very outlook on life. One Susan B. Wood writes to the editor of *The New York Times* that, after one year of solid effort and much worry, she has ascertained that any inhabitant of the world, after shuffling a pack of 52 cards of the standard variety used by Culbertson and Lenz, has just one chance in 80,658,175,170,943,878,571,660,636,856,403,766,975,289,505,440,883,277,724,000,000,000,000 of finding the cards in the same order as before shuffling.

We recommend Susan B. Wood for an honorary degree and a professorship.

—*Columbia Spectator.*

ual pursuit. In the thirty-five years from 1840 to 1876 only fifty-nine of the 472 graduates neglected to send in their two-cent stamps. Twelve of the graduating classes have a perfect record, while in eleven classes only one person, from each class, failed to send for their degrees.

The firemen were turned into electricians when they were called to Church street to put out a fire resulting from a short-circuited curling iron yesterday afternoon.

The trouble with most of us in retrenching is that we want to take the "me" out of economy.—*Norfolk Virginian-Pilot.*



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DEPTH SOUNDERS FOR AIRCRAFT

WITH the application of electricity to aircraft instruments, another chapter was written in the annals of air transportation. To-day's ship is not only swifter but safer and more dependable. Modern depth-sounding devices indicate instantly the height of the ship above the ground surface. A unique feature of General Electric's recently purchased monoplane is the almost completely electrified instrument panel.

The most recently developed instrument is the sonic altimeter, which provides a quick means of indicating changes in height above ground. Sound from an

intermittently operated air whistle is directed downward. The echo is picked up in a receiving megaphone, and the sound is heard through a stethoscope. The elapsed time between the sound and the echo determines the height. Tests show that water, buildings, woods, etc., produce echoes that are different and characteristic.

Besides developing a complete system of aircraft instruments, college-trained General Electric engineers have pioneered in every electrical field—on land, on sea, and in the air.

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