1908

Trinity College Bulletin, June 1908 (Report of the President)

Trinity College

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Trinity College

Report

of

The President

June, 1908

Hartford

Printed for the College

1912
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

To the Trustees of Trinity College:

GENTLEMEN: — I beg leave to submit herewith my annual report.

Gifts have been received during the year amounting to six thousand dollars, five thousand from William G. Mather, Esquire, of Cleveland, of the class of 1880, and one thousand from William P. Clyde, Esquire, sometime a member of the class of 1861. Notice also has been received of a legacy of ten thousand dollars from the estate of the late John Ordronaux, who received an honorary degree from the College in 1870. Smaller gifts, aggregating about six hundred dollars, have been placed in my hands for use in paying needy students for work which they have undertaken for their own support and to the advantage of the College. The matter of the legacy from the Boardman Estate is still in an unsatisfactory condition. A detailed report as to this matter will be made by the college counsel and I shall not discuss it in this place.

During the year the Faculty has been without the services of the Reverend Doctor McCook, who has been spending a year of much-needed rest in foreign travel. The Trustees will be glad to know that his health is greatly improved and that he anticipates being able to take up his work with fresh vigor at the opening of the next academic year.

Professor Merrill's resignation was received and acted upon at the last meeting, and the Board will be called upon at this meeting to pass upon the action of the Committee on Educational Departments in inviting to the Chair of the Latin Language and Literature Professor Frank Gardner Moore, Associate Professor of Latin in Dartmouth College.

Aside from their class-room work, the several members of the Faculty report as follows:
Professor Edwards published a paper on the "Holothurians of the North Pacific Coast of North America" as Number 1558 of the Proceedings of the United States Natural Museum. He has read two papers before the International Zoological Congress, held in Boston. The first of a series of papers based upon the results of Professor Edwards' long continued work in investigation of problems of development, growth, and variation in Holothurians is now in press and will appear under the editorship of Mr. Karl Pearson.

Professor Urban has published an article entitled "What is the Function of the General Theory of Value," which was read before the American Philosophical Association at Cornell in December. Also an article on the "Nature of Feeling and Will and their Relations" and a review of Münsterberg's "Philosophical Values." Professor Urban's work entitled "Valuation, Its Nature and Laws, an Introduction to the General Theory of Value" has been announced and is presently going through the press.

Professor Perkins has continued his study of ionization produced in an alternating electrostatic field. He has read papers before the American Physical Society and before the University Club, and an article of his has lately appeared in the American Journal of Science. With the assistance of his advanced students, a special investigation has been made on the radio-activity of Hartford spring water, on the hemispherical candle power of various kinds of electric lights, and in other lines of research and engineering tests.

Professor Kleene reports having delivered several lectures on Economic subjects in Hartford and one before the American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Professor Honey has published a regular course of instruction in Perspective and Descriptive Geometry in the National Builder, articles on Elementary Astronomy in the Scientific American, in the Engineering News, and in Machinery. He has in press several pamphlets and monographs upon similar subjects.

Professor Merrill has published two articles in Classical Philology and several book reviews in the New York Nation.
It is a matter of regret to his Trinity colleagues that his critical edition of Pliny’s letters will not go to press until after his connection with Trinity has come to an end.

Assistant Professor Adams has published a monograph entitled “The Temporal Clause in Old English Prose.” It appears as part of the Yale Studies in English, as Professor Adams did his graduate work at that University. Professor Adams is now employed in collaboration with Professor A. S. Cook is preparing a Bibliography of English Scholars. It is expected that this will be ready for the press in about a year.

Professor Gettell has lectured before the Connecticut Historical Society and other clubs in Hartford and before the Middlesex County Historical Society of Middletown. He has contributed book reviews to the Annals of the American Society of Political and Social Science and is engaged in some work for the Political Science Quarterly.

Referring now to the work carried on in the lecture rooms, the elections made by the students are of interest. They are as follows:

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In some cases, men electing two successive half-courses in a department have been counted twice. This should be
taken note of. Yet it is fair, perhaps, to take account of a student's choice when he has opportunity to continue or to discontinue any department of study.

Of the sixteen professors reporting, eight say nothing as to the character of the work done in their classes or merely characterize it as fair. Six speak of their satisfaction with the industry of their students. One is pleased with four of his five classes, and one notes improvement but evidently thinks there should be considerable further improvement.

Two reports are of particular interest on account of the subjects of which they treat.

It will be recalled that Professor Beckwith has completed his first year in charge of the Department of Biblical Literature. He had one class, which was not as large as I had hoped it might be. But the members have found the work so stimulating and valuable that I feel certain that there will be a larger membership next year. In addition to this elective course in Religious Study, Professor Beckwith has carried on a Sunday afternoon Bible Class which has been well attended, and has directed certain other voluntary study in similar lines undertaken by students whose names are not reported to the Faculty. I think the College may congratulate itself on the change which has been made in the manner of conducting the so-called Religious Studies, and that we may look for a satisfactory development of interest in this kind of work.

The other special report was that of the Medical Director, Doctor H. C. Swan. It is interesting to read that Doctor Swan notes an improvement in the general physical condition of the men entering college last year as compared with the Freshmen of earlier years. The number of excuses for illness has been less this year than last year, notwithstanding the increased attendance. Nevertheless, it is fairly evident that a college student is more easily disabled than any other variety of human being. It is noteworthy further that whereas about one-quarter of our students live at home, either in Hartford or in neighboring towns, just about one-half of the excuses for illness have been granted to this small number of students. These excuses are based upon the statement of their parents
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

or guardians that the students are confined at home by illness. It is gratifying to have the healthful character of the college surroundings and the sanitary perfection of our condition thus emphasized by the fact that the students in College are sick only one-third as much as the students who live at home. The excellent character of the medical supervision enjoyed by our resident students is also brought into pleasant notice by these statistics.

Further items in the reports of the professors should be mentioned:

Professor Babbitt expresses grave doubt as to the desirability of continuing the course in Elementary Greek. Nevertheless he does not propose to abandon it until after further trial.

Professor Edwards desires a larger appropriation than heretofore for the purposes of his work.

Professor Perkins withholds his judgment as to the usefulness of the course in Elementary Physics, introduced a year ago, but seems inclined to favor it.

Professor Honey requests that he be provided with an assistant. He has enjoyed this year the services of an unusually skilful undergraduate and it is hoped that such help as he needs may be furnished in this way at small expense next year.

Professor Flynn is seriously overworked, and it is fairly evident that next year there will be more work in the Department of Mathematics than one man can do. I propose to relieve him somewhat next year by taking one of his courses myself, but the College must before long, I think, provide a regular assistant for the department.

Professor Adams expresses great dissatisfaction with the results of his work with the class in Public Speaking, and as a request has come to the Faculty that Professor Adams be allowed to give a course in Argumentation to certain students who are preparing to enter law schools, it may be found well to substitute that for the course in Public Speaking next year, in the hope that by the year 1909-1910 some arrangement may be made whereby a person suitably skilled in Public Speaking may be secured who shall take charge of that work.
In the present condition of college finances, it seems proper to point out that the Department of Natural History is now disproportionately expensive. There seems no good reason for maintaining two full professors for carrying on work that apparently could be done by one professor and a tutor who should receive much less than the salary of a professor. Professor Genthe’s salary has been increased from time to time and his services recognized as was right in view of his ripe scholarship and great success. Professor Edwards also is a man who has always earned very much more than we have paid him. His services to the College have been and are invaluable. And yet I am constrained to recommend that after the year 1908-1909 unless there shall be a considerable change in our financial condition, this Department of Natural History be put in the hands of a professor and a tutor rather than in the hands of two professors. Should the Trustees approve this proposition it would be fair to give ample notice to Professor Edwards and Professor Genthe, and to make such arrangements as may be found practicable and desirable at an early date.

I am disposed also to recommend a discontinuance of the course in Shopwork. I do this with considerable hesitation, and would not consider the plan at all except that it seems the easiest way to save three or four hundred dollars a year. The course is always taken by a few students and I believe it to be a great advantage to them, as well as a service to the Department of Physics, with which it is associated, but there is an opportunity here for a slight retrenchment with a minimum of evil. That there will be some evil I cannot deny.

These recommendations bring me to the most serious question which confronts the College, that of our financial difficulties. In spite of such effort as we have been able to make, the failure of the Alumni to do what we asked of them four years ago, a failure which is perhaps due to their inability rather than to any lack of good will, has brought it about that we are getting deeper and deeper into debt. It will probably require about the whole of the Boardman legacy to square us with our accounts, and the increase of our capital
funds proceeds very slowly. On the other hand, it seems to me perfectly idle to consider any reduction of our expenses to our present income. A college such as Trinity was ten years ago cannot command any support; it is not large enough; it does not do work enough; it does not attract attention enough. We must get money sufficient to maintain our present scale of activity and to increase it or we must close the institution. We are in the position of a man thrown into deep water; we must swim or die. I have said so much and so many times on this subject that I need not dwell further upon it, except to say that I shall use my utmost efforts to raise money for additions to our endowment fund. I regard this coming year as the one which will determine whether we are to maintain ourselves or not; for it is inevitable that at the end of it we shall be under the necessity of raising the salaries of five or six of our professors by at least five hundred dollars. I am far from hopeless. I have some confidence that after the Presidential election is decided the financial situation will be such as will facilitate a definite attempt to raise a large sum of money, and there are individual promises on my list which afford some encouragement. I also in this connection recommend that the Trustees consider again the desirability of appointing some person under salary, other than myself, to devote his entire time to this undertaking of raising money.

It is proper that I should report upon certain student activities which constitute an important and significant part of college life. I am not among those college officers who claim that the greater part of the good which a young man obtains in college comes from what he does outside of his academic studies. Nevertheless, these outside matters are of importance and have a bearing upon the development of the graduate.

The athletic interests of the College are in a fairly satisfactory condition. The men have been reasonably successful in their games and seem to be carrying on their sports in a rational fashion. There has been a marked improvement in the attitude of the undergraduates toward athletics since the
College has established a definite and sufficiently severe intellectual standard of eligibility and has positively refused to enter into any further question of eligibility or to undertake to answer the question, "What is a professional?" Our Faculty now rule that anybody who is a student in good standing is entitled to take reasonable part in all athletic sports without further question from the institution. If they agree themselves to any further eligibility rules we expect them to live up to them, but we will not ourselves stand for any such rules. In my own opinion, the whole question of professionalism in college athletics has been given an amount of attention far beyond its real importance. I might say that any student is a professional as soon as he receives any part of his support or is supplied with any portion of his equipment for games except at his own personal expense, and if this standard were insisted upon it would rule out every college athlete in the United States. It is my opinion that the question of professionalism has arisen partly from an inherited set of ideas which have no place in our present civilization or in this country, partly from a desire to transfer the field of conflict from the arena to the forum, partly from more or less frenzied efforts by defeated athletes to explain the unexpected efficiency of their opponents. I see no reason why a wealthy alumnus should not defray the expenses of a young man in college for any reason which seems to him good, provided the young man is able to pass his examinations for admission and to maintain a satisfactory standing as a student. I do not believe that an athletic young man sent to college in this way is more likely to suffer demoralization than one whose expenses are defrayed for reasons which are based on other qualifications than his bodily strength. I do not believe there is any reason why a young man should not accept pay for playing baseball during the summer vacation provided he renders the proper equivalent for his wages, and if a man does do this it ought not, in my opinion, to separate him from college sports, provided always that he maintains his academic status. Evidence is not wanting that other colleges are coming to share the view which I have expressed above, and I
look confidently for a cessation of the too solemn discussions of professionalism in colleges which have occupied so large a portion of the attention of college officers during the past few years.

The musical organizations of the College have not done well during the past year and as they have failed to carry out their agreement with reference to the Chapel music I shall not ask that the trainer for the Glee Club be paid by the College hereafter.

There has been a gratifying growth in the interest of the undergraduates in the work of the Missionary Society and of the Saint Andrew’s Brotherhood. In a community as small as ours this interest varies largely from year to year, being dependent upon the activity and enthusiasm of a few individuals. This year their work has been well done.

I can not say that there has been a particularly religious spirit in the College. The men are as unwilling as heretofore to attend the prescribed Sunday services and only a few of them come to the voluntary services.

I desire in discussing college organizations to say a word about the fraternities. As you probably know, there are seven such organizations among our undergraduates. There are certain evils which grow out of the fact of the existence of these clubs. They tend to separate the college body into cliques not always in agreement. The practice of pledging freshmen even before they are admitted to college or before they are really known by the fraternities seeking them as members is attended by some very distinct evils. Membership in a fraternity adds somewhat to the expense of the college course. Failure “to make” a fraternity is often a serious disappointment to young men and has many times led to the withdrawal of desirable students from college. On the other hand, the good resulting from the existence of these fraternities is very great and in my mind quite over-balances the evils which have been mentioned. The loyalty of a man to his fraternity cannot be separated from his loyalty to the college. Nor can the prosperity of a fraternity exist independent of the prosperity of the college. The anxiety of the
fraternities to secure desirable men is a strong force in increasing our attendance. The feeling of an alumnus for his fraternity keeps him in touch with the College.

The experiment of allowing men to room in their fraternity buildings has been a very marked success. It is surprising to see the pride which men take in the reputation of their own houses when compared with the lack of such feeling with reference to the college dormitories. I am myself encouraging the fraternities to enlarge their quarters, to build dormitories, and to develop their institutional life in every reasonable way. The interest of the alumni in the reputation of their several fraternities is a very powerful influence for good in maintaining the discipline of the institution. I think that I am not exaggerating when I say that the trustees of a fraternity are more powerful than the Faculty of the College when it comes to the maintenance of good order and the abolition of evil practices; and I am not sure that men without special organization and without wearing pins would not naturally separate into cliques and from time to time contend with each other quite as vehemently as do the societies. When I observe how and along what lines older men separate themselves into groups and contend with each other in matters political, religious, and social, I am inclined to think that the spirit which has led to the formation and maintenance of fraternities is a deep-seated principle in human nature, and one which we should seek to control to the best interests of our community rather than one which we should seek to be little or destroy.

I am myself disposed to agree with the Professors above alluded to who think there has been an advance in the character of the class-room work during the past year; and the highly interesting report of the Librarian, submitted herewith, bears out this impression in the very gratifying statistics which he submits. Yet, on the whole, I am not able to say that a large proportion of the students show that interest in intellectual work which is desirable. They are content with low standards and if they succeed in passing are too apt to be satisfied. I do not think that Trinity College differs much
from similar institutions in this respect, but I should welcome a general increase in the character of the intellectual work voluntarily performed by American college students. We can hardly expect to be much better than others and are pleased to believe that we are certainly not worse than others. In my inaugural address given in 1904, I pointed out what I then believed to be true, that the average American young man is willing to do any amount of work if he can see its bearing upon the profession which he means to follow. I still believe that this statement is true and that we must be content while finding very few men who will pursue learning for learning's sake. The history of the world shows that men who will do this last thing are rarities among mankind. So it is my purpose to urge more and more strongly that our courses of study be made to bear as directly as possible upon the work of the several vocations usually contemplated by American undergraduates, and as fast as we succeed in this attempt we shall, I am sure, note a growing devotion to the studies which are offered to our young men. We shall find also, I think, that the culture so greatly valued will come from the fact that the young men study hard and will depend not at all upon their motives in studying or upon the kind of study which they pursue.

So much mention has been made in local publications and otherwise of the fact that I complete at this season twenty-five years of service as a member of the Faculty of Trinity College, that it seems proper for me to express now to the Trustees my appreciation of their continued courtesy, favor, and support. No man could ever be treated more kindly by his employers or more generously than I have been, and for all these things I thank you. . . .

Respectfully submitted,

F. S. Luther,
President.

June 22, 1908.