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Editorial Comment

Should Students Study?

IN the September number of Harper's magazine, there appears under the caption "Should Students Study?" an interesting article written by Professor William Trufant Foster of Reed College, Portland, Oregon. The circumstance which gave rise to the article was the discovery that an amazingly large number of students attending College do not study, but rather squander their time and energy enjoying what is popularly known as "College Life." As Professor Foster's remarks are of as much significance to the High School pupil as to the College student, we make no apology for presenting them in this place to our fellow students.

Briefly stated, the reasons with which the trifling student justifies his sloth are: First, that it is not worth while "grinding" in High School or College; second, that he will postpone his real study for the professional school; third, that education does not consist of information derived from text books, in that one forgets all, or nearly all, that one learns in school.

The arguments with which Professor Foster combats these statements are based upon statistics compiled from the records of the leading institutions of

learning, not only in the United States, but also in England. These statistics show: First, that in the great majority of cases, the student who was of good standing in his High School course, achieved a like result, not only in College, but also in his professional studies; and second, that the record of the High School and College work of the majority of the leading men in all walks of professional life is of exceptional merit. From this, Prof. Foster concludes that students *should* study in that: First, hard work is the foundation of success; second, the efficient student has a good standing with his fellow-students; and third, one's future-career is, in great measure, dependent upon his achievement in school.

These, we take it, are in themselves excellent reasons why *any* student should study; but, considered with reference to students of a backward race, these reasons, are of larger import. For, is it not true that—to borrow a not inappropriate figure—the procession has passed us, and that whether or not we shall catch up with it is contingent upon the good or ill use we make of our stay in school? Again, what about the grave warnings and helpful suggestions with respect to intellectual

preparedness made to us every year by some of the great thinkers from all parts of the country? Do we regard them merely as the unsubstantial vapors of an after-dinner speaker? What about the great world crisis and our relation to it? Shall we, like the five thoughtless virgins, be found without any oil in our lamps at the crucial hour? And finally, does not our sacred duty to the generations yet unborn impose upon us the obligation to make good use of our time in school? THE HERALD thinks that our duty *does* impose upon us the obligation to study; and it thinks, too, that this is a matter that merits the consideration of every student of Howard Academy.



The Honor System

At a recent meeting of the Academy Senate, a bill which has for its object the establishment of the Honor System in Howard University was introduced by Senator A. A. Brown, Representative of the Middle Class. A lively discussion followed, the sentiment of the body being overwhelmingly in favor of the bill.

Dean Syphax, who presided, while in sympathy with the measure, expressed a desire to see some evidence among the students favoring the adoption of the bill. The further consideration was postponed.

Owing to the limited space at our disposal, we can not do jus-

tice, at this time, to this all important subject. We, therefore, reserve our comment for the next issue of THE HERALD. For the information of our readers, however, and with a view to preparing the minds of the student body for a full discussion of this matter, it may, perhaps, be well to define the subject. By the "Honor System" we mean that policy on the part of the University authorities which assumes that every student, in his relation to the school activities in general, and to the class room work in particular, is actuated by motives of unquestioned honesty—a policy which necessarily dispenses with that police-like supervision which at present prevails. The question which now confronts the students is: do we want the Honor System?

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The Value of Correct Speaking

What is correct speech? Correct speech is the expression of thoughts by means of language which is grammatically and rhetorically right.

The reasons for cultivating correct speaking are many and reasonable. First, correct speech is a mark of good breeding and culture. It is one of the indicators which point out a person as belonging to the aristocracy of learning. Correct speech is one of the marks which distinguish the person of culture from his less fortunate brother. Then too, as an evidence of self-respect, correct speech is invaluable. In every day life, the best impressions are not made by one's appearance alone, but by the telltale utterances which commend or betray the speaker, and sometimes hold him up to ridicule. By the careful use of correct speech, a person inspires respect and avoids ridicule. Thoughts are expressed in their originality without the possible chance of error or misconception by couching them in the best and correct language. It affords us great pleasure to be able to join in a conversation, and to express our ideas in a clear, comprehensible, and scholarly manner. The ability to do this commands appreciation and respect from those around. It creates much confusion and misun-

derstanding, when, in an attempt, to give vent to our feelings, ideas or convictions, we violate the laws of grammar, and pay no attention to the principles of rhetoric. There is no excuse for the person who, by carelessness or laziness, disregards the value of correct speech, and falls into the vulgar habit of using colloquial and slang expressions—a habit which could have been avoided by thought and attention.

There are many difficulties encountered in cultivating correct speaking. Of these, two which many of us encounter might be mentioned. The first is the use of bad English around us. This literary disease is very contagious, and a person is infected before he is aware that he is a victim of this trouble.

The *Literary Digest* for September 30, in an article entitled "At Last! An American Language," says: Our language—the American—is no stationary thing. It is on the move; it has characteristic 'hustle.' We are busy smashing consonants, spoiling vowels, crushing whole phrases into a grunt—'Uddia—doon—air?' (What are you doing there?): 'Sry' (That is right). In that respect our development is like the French language during the period of its most rapid advance. Like the French, we have begun to drop our final consonants. A jitney—ride costs 'fie cense' (five cents). Our

evening valedictory is 'Good-night!' This extract illustrates the hold which bad English is taking upon the American public and the harm which comes from the use of careless speech.

The second difficulty is the possibility of falling into the habit of using slang expressions. A very good illustration of slang is found in the same issue of the *Literary Digest*. It says: "Spoken American has travelled far from spoken English." The English lift the receiver and mildly inquire: "Are you there?" Americans, rattle the handle and cry: "H'lo! h'lo! who-ziss?" The English say: 'Rah-ther!' we, 'Sure thing' They, 'doh-er in;' we, 'double-cross her.' They shut it;' we 'can it.' They tap their forehead significantly and murmur: 'Balmy!' We remark: 'Nobuddy atome!'" These hindrances cannot be too vigorously fought against, and the fight should not be given up until these habits are overcome permanently.

The habit of correct speaking cannot be acquired entirely by contact with those who speak correctly for, without the knowledge of the principles governing correct speech there is a possibility of erring. According to Ruskin "An uneducated person may know, by memory, many languages, and talk them all, and yet truly know not a word of any—not a word even of his own."

The frequent use of the dictionary is very essential in cul-

tivating good speech, and should be the mainstay of the student. Two royal roads to success in correct speaking are study and practice, and, as students, we should put into practise by the constant use of good English, the grammatical and rhetorical knowledge which we have gained during our educational sojourn in the realms of syntax and the kindred studies. It is necessary, then, to follow these roads if we desire to reach the Kingdom of correct English.

In conclusion, let us remember that as we leave school, and go forth to fill our places in the busy and skeptical world, that the employer judges the prospective employee, for the most part by his first interview, and at that time correct speech is invaluable; besides that, let us bear in mind that correct speech will go far towards making a person known and respected as a cultured and worthy citizen.

—*Jno. A. Elcock, '17.*

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