

# The O. A. C. Review

The Dignity of a Calling is Its Utility

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## Editorial.



FEW more swiftly flying weeks will bring to a close the college year of 1896-97. With mingled feelings of satisfaction and regret, the student will lay aside his lecture notes, pack his trunk and go down to the station to exchange farewells with the boys. The successful ones will carry with them their well earned degrees or diplomas, and the brilliant few will be the proud recipients of medals, scholarships, or valedictory prize. For many it will mean the completion of their college life, and return home to the old farm where they will enter upon a new course differing from that just completed, in the fact, that action will largely replace study.

At this juncture, there arise two questions, - has the college course benefited the students and inspired the best efforts among them, and have the examinations gauged the intellectual capacities so accurately that the rewards have been bestowed upon the most worthy men? In any particular class, the examination will soon begin its work of sorting the raw material into the different grades: the stars who strive for first-class honors; the steady pluggers who take a good average; and the poll who are continually dropping below the thirty three per cent. limit or coming dangerously near to it. The competition for the prizes narrows down to five or six, while the majority of the class work in an indifferent mood to maintain a respectable standing. The medals are an incentive only to those who are in the race for them, and these are just the ones who are least in need of a spur; to the average man, and to the careless, they are no incitement whatever. Another objection to the awarding of prizes is the encouragement it gives to cramming at the expense of mental discipline and the development of originality. With many of the subjects on the course the qualifications for success are a retentive memory, hermit-like habits, and an aptitude for rapid penmanship. The examination questions require a faithful reproduction of the lecture notes. Very seldom is there one which calls for any considerable exercise of the judgment. Under the conditions a man who turns aside to study

more closely some point which has engaged his attention is like the runner in a foot race who stops to tie his shoe laces.

In this utilitarian age, there are those who advocate the abolition of medals, honors, and degrees, along with the college cap and gown, as being relics of a less enlightened age. President Jordan, of Leland, Stanford, University, says: "They are a part of our inheritance from the past, from the time when scholarship was not manhood, when the life of the student had no relation to the life of the world." They set up a false standard of attainment, and appeal to motives the most unworthy; they cause rivalry among those who should be co-workers and often excite a secret envy among the disappointed. The student should be more of an independent investigator, for with the multiplication of books and the easy means of securing printed information on any subject, the college is a convenience and not an absolute necessity in acquiring an education.

## A Few Rambling Remarks.



THE Third Year Exams, are once more numbered with those of the past, and it is a source of pleasure to each and every one of the class to be relieved from study for a short period. It rests now with the examiners as to what the results shall be; all the Year can do is to hope for the best. On the whole, the papers were more difficult than those set in past years, and the assertion might be freely ventured that some of them were much too difficult for the time allotted to the study of the subject on which they were set. We question the advantages of the Special Courses. Much more time will have to be given to the study of the subjects in some of them, and less to some of the General Course subjects, before a graduate can be fully equipped to compare himself with the specialist, along the same lines, from other institutions.

A specialist from this institution, has but one course he can pursue, if he wishes to take a position of teacher or lecturer, namely, that he is allowed to teach in Agricultural Colleges only. The positions in these colleges both in Canada and the United States are filled to overflowing, and he is consequently shut out from this line of work. In an edi-