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Our Tuesday Letter

From Columbia University.

New York City, Feb. 18, 1903.
Dear Nebraskan: Columbia University is situated on Morningside Heights, several miles from the congested portions of the city, and close to the Hudson. The grounds are no larger than the campus of the University of Nebraska, and the necessary crowding of buildings detracts from the impressiveness of the University. The library building is excellent from the point of view of architecture, and several of the other buildings are very good. But there is one unsightly structure, a relic of the insane asylum which occupied this place before Columbia took possession, which mars the beauty of the campus. Before many years, however, it is likely to be torn down. A number of improvements are contemplated. In his report last fall, President Butler mentioned the need of sufficient funds to finish University hall (which has been begun), to build a law school building, to buy a few acres of land across the street, at the rate of about five hundred thousand dollars an acre, and to pay off the university debt. He estimated the needs of the university at about ten million dollars, and rumor has it that the money has been promised.

A university with as great resources as this one has offers many advantages in instruction and equipment. We find it very convenient, for instance, to have so good a library that we can work up almost any subject with a fair degree of completeness. There are between three and four hundred thousand volumes in the Columbia library, and large numbers of books are bought every year. If a student needs to refer to a book which is not in the library, the authorities get it for him whenever they can. In this library free access to stack rooms cannot be had without permission from the librarian. But graduate students in history, political economy, sociology, etc., are allowed to work in a large seminar room containing a hundred thousand volumes, and they may take books from the shelves and keep them on the tables as long as they please. Students of philosophy and pure science have similar privileges in another seminar room. I understand that the equipment of the science department is also very good.

The undergraduate department is much weaker than I expected to find it. Out of about four thousand students registered this year, only five hundred are undergraduates in Columbia College. There are five hundred graduate students in the political sciences, philosophy and pure science; five hundred students of law; eight hundred in the school of medicine, and seven hundred in applied science. Barnard College, which is for girls alone, and Teachers' College, which is co-educational, have about a thousand students. Some of the professors think that it would be good to lop off Columbia College altogether, and make Columbia University a graduate and professional school exclusively.

One of the most striking characteristics of Columbia is its lack of college spirit. This is due partly to the smallness of the undergraduate college, but chiefly to the bigness of the city. There are too many things of interest outside of the university. There seems to be some enthusiasm, however, for inter-collegiate basket ball games and

gymnastic contests, but their popularity may be due in part to the dances which always follow them. The equipment of the gymnasium is very good. The gymnasium is fairly large, and there is a big dressing room with a plethora of lockers. There are also shower baths and a good swimming pool. Private lessons in fencing and boxing are given at moderate rates. Undergraduates are required to take certain courses in the gymnasium.

I cannot say from experience what the character of the work done by Columbia undergraduates is. I have heard that it averages very well when compared with the work in western universities. Some of the men do no work at all, while others work very hard. Regular attendance at class is required. Four unexcused absences result in a condition which can be removed only by extra work, an extra examination, or both.

It seems that the students are allowed some liberties which are tabooed in the University of Nebraska. Last summer when I read a notice in the halls of the library that "Smoking is not allowed above the ground floor," I was surprised at the permission implied. There is a great deal of smoking on the ground floor, and between classes many cigarettes are consumed on the fourth as well. The evening I attended a meeting of King's Crown, a literary society which holds forth in University hall, and nearly everybody there smoked during the business meeting and lecture, and at the end of the program they used up a keg of beer.

Columbia University is an excellent place for graduate work and for professional studies, but I cannot see that it has any great advantage over a western university for undergraduate work. Of course it is an advantage for students to have within reach a large number of books; but that is not essential for undergraduates. The specialists here, too, generally lecture only to seniors and graduates. Lower classes are under the tutelage of instructors, who are only waiting for the time when they can devote all their attention to more advanced students.

So, even leaving out of account the high tuition fees and the great cost of living in New York as compared with student's expenses in a city like Lincoln, I should consider a western university fully as good a place for undergraduate work as is Columbia College.
H. T. JOHNSON, '00.

The students in the mechanical engineering laboratory course, under direction of Mr. Dean, made an eight-hour test Saturday of the Heine safety boiler (located in the west end of the boiler house) under the conditions of hand firing and natural draft, in order to determine the efficiency of the boiler under natural working conditions.

The Palladian Literary society will show their appreciation of their victorious basket ball team by having a picture of the five taken for the society. The picture will probably be framed and hung in Palladian hall.

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University Bulletin

SENIORS meet Tuesday, 10 a. m., in U. 206. Important business.

SECOND TEAM football men who were awarded sweaters may call at Samuel Hall's and receive them. E. R. Buckner, Manager.

ALL students who are expecting to become candidates for the University teachers' certificate in June should consult with the head of the department of education regarding their work within the next two weeks.

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