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INTELLECTUAL INTERCHANGE AMONG FACULTIES OF ENGINEERING SCHOOLS¹

By Professor DUGALD C. JACKSON

THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A MAN who becomes over-trammelled by rules, precedents and tradition will always remain a commonplace man. One who breaks precedents and tradition seldom is a commonplace man, and from such usually come the helpful leaders or notable criminals. The ones who break conventional rules with convincing service to fellow men and without injury to the social organism are the leaders. An instinctive ability to recognize the times and places when usual conventions ought to be observed, and when progress may be better achieved by breaking their shackles, is evidence of originality and creative vision. These qualities should be more fully cultivated in the faculties of engineering schools, and their evolution made a matter of our earnest mutual concern.

It is interesting to reflect on the erroneous con-

ventions and traditions which came to us from the Victorian era and which have biased the thinking of the present generation. For example, it is still sometimes individually believed and taught (because of Victorian tradition) that the Periclean period in Athens was the golden age of the world. Nevertheless, it probably was the orgy of exploitation and spending by Pericles and his party which brought ancient Athens to the brink of its downfall with resulting increase of sorrow and hardship for all the population, from the highest citizen to even the lowliest slave. Thinking of that period as a golden age for humanity, whatever its triumphs of sculpture and architecture, exhibits a failure to inquire and explore beneath a surface aspect which is deceptively polished and graceful. This deficient procedure is not appropriate to education which is to serve for the best interest of civilized society or its individual human components.

¹ Address before Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education, in Engineers' Week, Chicago, Illinois, June, 1933.

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