things which in the commercial world would not be tolerated for a single day. Some colleges have a much greater proportion of this kind of students, but all colleges have far too many. It is certainly not logical to say that the work of the colleges is so admirable in some respects that the undesirable should be overlooked.

The colleges continually appeal to the public for money and for students. Then why is not this public entitled to consider all phases of college administration and college work? It is considered wise to examine all sides to other questions, and to give the proper relative weight to all things involved. Why should the college question demand a special kind of treatment? Whether instructors and students accomplish as much as they might with the facilities available and with the funds expended is not by any means unimportant. Unless we can claim exemption from any form of criticism, we have no grounds for objection to criticism here.

However true it may be that other things connected with the work of the colleges are more important than those discussed in the Cooke report, no convincing reasons have been given, nor can be given, to show that the bad in our college system can not be improved without the least detriment to the good. In fact to improve in one line must naturally tend to improve others also. To waste time and money will not help any student to become a great scientist or a good citizen. A long, tedious and expensive investigation is more likely to bear fruit in the hands of one who has some idea of the value of his own time and the other things he employs. The dilettante in science hinders its progress more than he helps.

I can not see how improvement in the business management of our colleges or improvement in the quality of our student body by sending home those who will not do a reasonable amount of work, or improvement in other lines that might be mentioned, can in the least do other than "tend to assist those conducting these institutions and their students towards the attainment of their own highest ideals in scholarship, character development and culture."

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February 21, 1911

LABORATORY TABLE TOPS

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In SCIENCE for February 17, 1911, I notice a short discussion of suitable material for laboratory table tops. Having just found something quite satisfactory, which, so far as I know, is new, the mention of it may be of interest.

The table I have recently tried has a hexagonal top approximately six feet in diameter. The substratum is of pine seven eighths thick and of pieces cross-joined. This substratum is overlaid with a three eighths cover of "asbestolith," a composition of asbestos and cement. This cover of asbestolith was infiltrated with paraffin. To hold the cover the substratum was partially bored to supply small holes which were filled with the asbestolith. This asbestolith is laid on like cement and hardens. It can be made to cover the edge of the top so that the top has the appearance of a solid slab. This top has an absolutely continuous surface, a high degree of resilience, is acid and alkali proof, and can be repaired at any time to original form. The only effect of heat is to melt the paraffin, but this has not proved a serious objection, as it can always be rubbed down to look well. The work was done for me by the Waco Cement Company, but no doubt can be duplicated almost anywhere.

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TOTEMISM

IN SCIENCE for February 17 there appeared a report of a paper on "The Totemic Complex" read by myself at a meeting of the Anthropological Society of Washington, on January 17, 1911. I wish to correct some statements made in that report, which might prove misleading. The beginning of the study of totemism does not date back to the sixteenth but to the later half of the nineteenth century. The various features of totemism (exogamy,