

**THE AMERICAN COLLEGE: A SERIES
OF PAPERS SETTING FORTH THE
PROGRAM, ACHIEVEMENTS,
PRESENT STATUS, AND PROBABLE
FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE**

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The American College: A Series of Papers Setting Forth the Program, Achievements, Present Status, and Probable Future of the American College by William H. Crawford

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WILLIAM H. CRAWFORD

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THE AMERICAN COLLEGE

*A Series of Papers Setting Forth the Program,
Achievements, Present Status, and Probable
Future of the American College*

With Introduction by

WILLIAM H. CRAWFORD
President Allegheny College



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INTRODUCTION

THE chapters included in this volume comprise the papers read at a Conference on the American College held on the occasion of the celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of Allegheny College. They were all specially prepared for this particular event. In fact, the entire programme of the conference was made out before anyone was asked to read a paper. Careful attention was given to selecting for a particular topic the man who could speak with authority on that topic. The book, therefore, is a new book, and presents the freshest and most comprehensive thought on the American college.

In making up the list of subjects not much attention was given to the early history of the American college or to the peculiar conditions which favored its early development. Much attention, however, was given to the programme of the college, its curriculum, its present status in various parts of the country, and its probable future. In short, it was aimed to include in the volume the essential things pertaining to the American college as a present-day institution and as an institution of promise for the future educational development

of America. Before finally deciding upon the topics to be discussed the advice of a goodly number of the foremost educators of the country was carefully sought and freely given. Furthermore, each one of the scholarly men invited to prepare a paper was asked to speak out his mind freely, and assured that what was wanted in the conference was a free, frank, and open expression of the thought of educational leaders touching the college as an institution included in the educational régime of our country.

The conference had been fairly well advertised beforehand in the public press. The unique character of the programme attracted no little attention. It was no surprise, therefore, that nearly one hundred colleges were represented at the opening session, nor was it a surprise that the spacious Ford Memorial Chapel was more than crowded to its capacity at the closing session. Not the audiences only but the interest increased from the beginning to the end. It was a matter of comment at the close of the first session that a conference of an unusually high order was on. The speakers were at their best, and some of them seemed to be better than their best. While there were some striking differences of opinion as to what the college ought to be, there was a fine spirit of toleration throughout and much more substantial agreement as to fundamentals than was antici-

pated. One speaker who made a strong plea for the place of the physical and the natural sciences in the college curriculum showed his catholic spirit in saying: "No education is liberal which does not introduce one to the world's best thought and life. A purely classical education and a purely scientific one are equally illiberal. A liberal education is broad, disciplinary, and useful; it educates head, heart, and hand; it must include literature, science, and the humanities; it must fit for contact with the world along many lines; it must help one to find himself and to choose his work; it must prepare for the largest usefulness and enjoyment." Another speaker whose responsibility was to plead for the humanities said: "The great defect with American college education is that it does not set the mass of students intellectually on fire. Our colleges are only in an imperfect degree intellectual institutions. The real rivalry is not between classics and sociology, between history and chemistry, but a struggle with ignorance, materialism, and superficiality for the development of the intellectual life. . . . Some of us would prefer to see students roused by literature, others by science, others by economics, but the main thing is that they be roused."

The European war was touched upon by several of the speakers. President Rhees referred to the so-called "biological defense" of the war.