

The College of Tomorrow

By J. H. McMIX

A LARGE corporate enterprise bought space in a Metropolitan daily newspaper to advertise an idea. They said: "We must do more along the lines of vocational education and adaption to prepare youth for the world of tomorrow. We must make it possible for more of our deserving young people to attend institutions of higher learning—an enrollment of 1,250,000 students out of a population of 130,000,000 is not enough." Two thoughts are here conveyed; one of practical preparation of hand and mind, and the other stressing a quantitative increase in the desire for education.

Ezra Pound, considered by many to be an authority on education, tells us that, "real education must ultimately be limited to men who insist on knowing; the rest is mere sheep herding." We have now before us two opinions, differing, but not necessarily in conflict. We cannot be certain what Pound means by "real education." If fundamental economics, taught with the same intensity as other major studies, is included, we cannot quarrel on that point. But when we think of having encountered college graduates, who claim the distinction of having majored in economics and still have but scant acquaintance with fundamental axioms and definitions, we must confess to some amazement.

The College of Today finds it difficult to abandon the "sheep herding" theory of education. Very, little if any, encouragement is offered to students for constructive thinking. Rarely does it profit a student to question the ideas of his Professor or the adopted textbook. The standing of a student in his class depends largely on his ability to hastily scribble notes in lecture periods and if endowed with a fair memory, he earns his mark accordingly. A parrot can be taught to say many things, but does he know what he is talking about? Scientific economists will continue to find "sheep herding" in education difficult of acceptance.

Still another viewpoint is obtained from a recent report of the Carnegie Foundation on Pennsylvania Schools. It advances the theory that we are now educating the wrong people in college; that there are too many young people of high academic calibre who are denied the opportunity because of economic circumstances. Something might be done to induce the Carnegie Foundation to recognize that the circumstances complained of may be directly attributed to the sort of economics with which the student is confronted upon his entry in the halls of higher education. The problem, in its entirety, cannot be sidestepped, nor should it be dismissed lightly.

Real conflict of opinion regarding education in colleges does not begin until qualitative methods are under discussion. It may, perhaps, be just as well that the percentage of college students to population is low, when

we consider the product upon emerging. If the College of Today persists in disregarding economic fundamentals, little hope can be held out for the youth girded with a parchment issued by the College of Tomorrow.

A recent issue of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* suggests succinctly the trend of our educational problem: "As goes this throng of youth, so, in the years to come, goes the nation." Could the *Bulletin* editors have been thinking about the attacks to which both Harvard and Yale have been subjected for keeping "radical" professors? The University of Oklahoma is on the gridiron for teaching Communism. The assumption that the teaching of all doctrines, radical and conservative alike, is undemocratic, is wholly incompatible with democratic tradition. Tolerance of ideas is the essence of democracy.

It is the business of universities to teach Communism, Fascism, Bolshevism, Mormonism, Mesmerism, Republicanism and any other ism—but without fear or favor. The sin is in showing favoritism for *any* ism. How can a student be expected to make comparisons of philosophies and ideologies if only one is taught to the exclusion of all the other theories for social betterment? Under the direction of impartial tutors a student may accept or reject a point of view entirely in accordance with his ability to reason and differentiate. It is a flaw in reasoning to ask that no disturbing issues be touched upon in a university course; or to assume that students should emerge from college with exactly the same ideas with which they entered. Such a process would hardly be education.

The most far-reaching influence of education may be said to be qualitative rather than quantitative. The importance of a nation in its influence for good upon other nations depends upon the quality of thought and action of the people constituting such a nation. A single directing force may accomplish the greatest good—or the greatest harm. An Emerson, a Whitman, a Jefferson, can by the very force of their ideas affect their contemporaries as well as bequeath the quality of their spirit to succeeding ages.

The College of Tomorrow may well heed the need for the control of emotion. We are too often confronted with a theory of education which maintains that the latest fact conquers, when in truth we really live in a world in which the predominant emotion conquers. Business is built up or destroyed, laws are enforced or flouted, lives are redeemed or wrecked, all by love and hate. The college that does not recognize the importance of emotional training is derelict in its duty.

It is a large order to assign the responsibility for the present day curricula, for the selection and limitation of text books, and the methods employed in the propagation of a higher education. Many people who cherish their independence of thought and action have been greatly concerned about the possible influences which could be exerted by the creators of foundations and endowments. It is a serious matter to file an indictment of subservience against the faculty of any college. But what is one to

think, when confronted so repeatedly with the consistent refusal of faculties to accept and expound simple truths?

There evidently must be a vast number of teachers in our universities who are obliged to adopt the lines of least resistance, in order to assure their tenure. In the business-world, such individuals are characterized as "yes-men," and they seem somehow, not only to get along, but manage to get on, as well. But they never become outstanding personalities, such as we are so sorely in need of, both in the business-world and in our college faculties.

Who knows how significant may be the power of external influences? A man whose testimony cannot be disregarded and who has a broad experience as a college teacher and professor, recently remarked in the course of a public address: "I witnessed many honorary degrees conferred on philanthropically inclined gentlemen with profound citations; and I have heard those old rascals expound *their* theories of political economy, which were wholly incompatible with recognized authorities." All of which only adds to the problem, and emphasizes the injunction that it *cannot be sidestepped nor should it be dismissed lightly*.

Another task for the College of Tomorrow is to recognize that the need for straight thinking in economics is at least as important as in other fields of learning. That this is not yet recognized is well illustrated by the following story.

A small group of college professors were discussing the proceedings after one of the sessions of a New York State Conference of Single Taxers, back in 1914. They happened to be there, because the meetings were held in an upper New York University, through the courtesy of its head. Among those present was the Professor of Economics and the Professor of Engineering, who, much to the consternation of the former, gave his hearty approval to the proceedings. The Professor of Economics, in the most gentlemanly manner, touched with unmistakable signs of sarcasm, could not understand how such a highly trained technician could subscribe to such views. It was unbelievable, he said, that such an outstanding Engineer could not see through the fallacy of the proposals.

The Engineer maintained a dignified calm while the Economist was verbally chastising him. Finally the Engineer replied: "You see, my dear Professor, it does not matter a great deal what you teach *your* students. If they do not understand their text-books, they soon forget that they ever took up economics. If, perchance, what you teach, should permeate their skulls, and even if it turns out to be wrong, nothing very serious can result which cannot eventually be corrected. But in my department, it is entirely different. My greatest problem is to teach my students to think straight. And the penalty for their failure, or inability to think straight, is that the bridge will fall."

Prophetic Words,

I CAME upon a sentence which I submit is prophetic in high degree:

"Is it too soon to hope that it may be the mission of this Republic to unite all nations of English speech, whether they grow beneath the Northern Star or Southern Cross, in a league, which, by insuring justice, promoting peace and liberating commerce, will be the forerunner of a world-wide federation that will make war the possibility of a past age and turn to works of usefulness the enormous forces now dedicated to destruction?"

Those words were spoken in San Francisco by Henry George in a Fourth of July oration, 1877. They are prophetic in their insight and prophetic in their appeal.

Shall we sit still indefinitely and let the world drift with all which that may mean, or shall we concern ourselves with the task of leadership in a broken, impoverished, and war-torn world? Shall we lead, or shall we sit and watch and wait and take the consequences?

—DR. NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER.

Natural Government*

BY T. E. McMILLAN

AS one who had put in ten or more years of hard and enthusiastic work on behalf of social justice, holy justice, honest government, an equitable distribution of wealth, aiming to relieve man of the fierce, tigerish struggle for mere material sustenance, the conviction slowly dawned upon me that we shall never get this vision realized until we adopt the form of government fashioned for us by the Creator.

The word "factitious": "artificial, as contrasted with natural; sham, unreal, spurious," is a good description of our forms of government in the world today, and while we have them it will be useless for the world's statesmen to "reason together," for such conferences could only be like a modern Tower of Babel. Let us, in chastened mood, observe Nature's method of government, that is, the divine way.

We actually did adopt God's form of government when we first came out of the jungle into the clearing, but we have, in the complexity of progress, got right away from our natural social foundations. So we are back in the jungle. When we adopt the system God made for us, we shall have the master key to the solution of the social problems that now baffle and break the hearts of high-minded men and women. The Natural Laws are all simple, direct, unchangeable. By obeying them we shall come to the Kingdom on Earth, and by no other way. They are of the Kingdom. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (that is, rightness, justice), "and all these things" (material well-being) "shall be added unto you."

* From "This Struggle," reviewed in this issue.