

Hail! The Conquering Heroes

By Frank Chodorov

During the past month thousands upon thousands of be-capped and be-gowned young men and women have emerged from the chrysalis of childhood. Fluttering away into the mystic world of productive activity the hopeful butterflies will seek the promise embodied in their four or more years of preparation. What will they find?

The mining engineer, fully equipped with knowledge, vigor and ambition to seek more and more things in the bowels of the earth will find his way blocked by the monopolist who, in order to collect tribute from his fellow man, restricts production. From mine to mine the young adventurer will go, perhaps from country to country. Somewhere he may find a partially "free" mine—one which the owner must work in order to live. Perhaps he will be fortunate enough to seek employment during a war period, when the crazy demand for instruments of destruction will yield the owner the monopoly rent which measures his avarice. He may find a job because death or age has caused a vacancy. Or, after fluttering about for years he may eventually find some menial nook in the field of production, for which he is no better fitted than his fellow worker who never went to a mining school, but at which he can at least earn a livelihood. Like driving a taxicab.

Here's a hopeful teacher, somewhat pedantic-looking, but nevertheless charming because of her self-assurance and apparent determination. She has studied hard, prepared an excellent paper on infant psychology, excelled in her teacher-training class, acclaimed by a continuous succession of A's a most perfect product of her college. She has yet to pass the examinations required by the city educational authorities. Tush! After she has hurdled this insignificant obstacle she waits for an appointment. And she waits. There is need for teachers, for the classrooms are over-

crowded to the extent that effective teaching is impossible, two sessions a day require that some pupils must get to school at eight in the morning, backward children are not given the special training which her textbooks declare imperative, some tots have to travel indecent distances—there are ever so many reasons for more schools and more teachers.

Why must she wait for an appointment? Because the lords of the land have decreed that the taxes on their earth are already too high, or have placed on that earth a price that makes the building of schools prohibitive. So, she has to be satisfied with an occasional substitute's job while she waits. But, even a pedantic young lady likes the little fineries that make for feminine happiness, and the lack of them has its effect on her self-assurance and determination. Before long she begins to think wistfully of that which at graduation time filled her with disgust—a place in the kitchen. Heaven grant her wish!

This young man of studious mien has just completed eight years of struggling with materia medica. His family has deprived itself of everything but bare necessities in order that he may achieve his ambition to become a physician, and a better competence based upon the assumed scarcity of medicos. He has still his internship to do. But after that?

Father will borrow, mother will cut down on her house expenses, sister will go without a new dress in order that he may finally open an office—an office where he will wait for patients. Not that there are no sick to minister to, for the clinic where he works without compensation is overcrowded daily, and the treatment is necessarily scant. Thousands need him but are unable to pay a fee. He

has two prospects of maintaining himself in his chosen profession. One is to marry some female nit-wit whose father has put her up for auction; the other is to do urinalyses for insurance companies until he is fortunate enough to get some paying patients.

Shall we look further into the careers of these hopeful butterflies? Here is a young architect whose drawing board will gather dust because the landlords refuse to permit building on their lots, until bought off. A pharmacist who would like to open a drug store but finds speculative rent blocking his way. There is a young lawyer who, in spite of his magna cum laude, will be glad to serve summonses at one dollar each in order to live. This graduate of the course in business management will find no businesses to manage.

Perhaps the most interesting of these graduates is the young man who has "majored in economics" and whose proficiency in this subject has gained for him a position on the faculty. What will he teach? What has been taught to him. That wealth is anything that has exchange value, like gold bricks, slaves and land. That poverty is caused by the pressure of population against subsistence, and that contraception or immigration restriction laws are the solution. Business cycles are as necessary as measles, and economics is the arithmetic of commerce. Of course, he knows nothing of the economic forces that determine social trends; therefore, he will write a book and secure a professorship.

It would be interesting to know in 1948 how many of these graduates had achieved the aims so meticulously built up in their minds these past four or eight years; how many of them had drifted into whatever work presented itself; how many had found sustenance only as wards of society. It's a safe bet that the percentage of "failures"—not due to their lack of training or industry—will be even higher than among those who graduated in 1923.

