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About Professors

Starting as a small troubled spring, three years ago when we entered college, and grown since that time into a welling flood of indignation, a feeling of resentment against the deplorable classroom practices of professors has induced us to express here in all candour, our honest opinion. We are mindful, of course, of the scores of professors who are quite capable—men who are scholars in every sense of the word—but there are a great number of instructors today who, we feel deserve criticism. This expression is written with all the respect traditionally held for the elder generation and with the full realization that student opinion cannot help but be immature. "Youth is unthinkingly harsh," someone has said. Nevertheless, even if our indictment is prompted through a childish misunderstanding, perhaps its presentation may aid a few instructors (and a few students!) to walk in a more revealing light.

To begin with, it is the common belief of all American undergraduates that their professors, either intentionally or unintentionally, stifle rather than encourage the creative impulses of pupils. Now, this may be an untruth, but merely the fact that the feeling exists is, it seems, sufficient cause for action. Some students have gone so far as to say that the professor who forbids "crib sheets" and "suggestion sheets" restricts and impedes creative thought. We are not inclined to agree with this criticism, but, nevertheless, it serves to illustrate to what extent student feeling may develop.

We do believe that the average teacher lays too much stress on detail, and too much emphasis on purely factual matter. A great many modern pedagogues appear to have the philosophy that if a student learns the unimportant, he is bound to learn the essential. This is true as far as the text-book goes, but the text-book is a poor standard for instruction, especially in the social sciences. If the subject is literature, and the story is about a knight in search of the Holy Grail, then the thing important is not the name of the knight's horse but the virtues of the knight himself, held as ideal by the writer. If a metrical romance tells of the mercenary enterprises of a medieval friar, then the class discussion should not resolve itself to a mere recount of the delinquencies of the particular man involved, but a discussion of the historical background which led the author to include such a character in his tale—in this instance, possibly, the policy in the Catholic Church, at that time, of promiscuously selling indulgences.

Aside from the criticism that college teachers do not encourage the creative impulse, there is also the very serious charge of laziness. Ninety-nine out of a hundred professors will enthusiastically agree that the chief student fault is lack of application. This same indictment we are sure, can be brought against most faculty members in the majority of universities. Seemingly blinded by the egoistic realization of their great amount of knowledge, no small number of classroom lecturers ramble on and on, from day to day, in disjointed accounts of their personal opinions and attitudes—not about the subject, but about their wives, their life in the Navy during the World War, and their interest in spring garden planting. Then they wonder why students fail monthly quizzes that set forth in rigid detail an outline of the text.

Another group of the lazy division is the fairly small cluster of "scientists" and "research men." Though continually congratulating themselves on their great amount of industry, they are really neglectful of their bound duty, teaching. Enthusiased over their profound study of sociological concepts, superheated steam, or tuberiferous plants, they forget that their honorable duty is the study of the science of teaching—for that is the means of their daily bread.

The last offender is the unimaginative fellow who apparently has no psychological concept of human nature whatever. He says: "Johnny is this so, or is that so? Answer yes or no." This man finds out what the student already knows (though we imagine he intimidates the pupil into an embarrassed, and thus sketchy, account of his knowledge), but does he teach him anything new? Suppose we are in a history class. The usual question is: "Ramsey, did Napoleon win or lose?" When it could be: "Class, why do you suppose that Napoleon met the fate he did?" The professor may still find out if the finally designated pupil knows whether Napoleon met defeat or victory, yet he has had, for a moment or two, the assurance that his whole class has been thinking.

If the subject is economics, too much importance can be attached to the learning of such things as: "What is a good, what is a utility, and what is income?" These are necessary fundamentals of economics, yes, but they can in no way assist the future business man in erecting his financial structure, and if given as dry bread without the butter of discussions of current economic policies, digestion will proceed without metabolism, and except for the exercise afforded the mind, all labor proves useless.

Suppose that the subject is chemistry! The instructor gives a long



explanation of the lead-chamber process of manufacturing sulphuric acid. Unless he includes in his lecture the application, or the lack of application, of that particular method to modern practice in industrial centers, the real value of his talk is lost. "Teach in connection with the subject's use" is an old pedagogical maxim, yet how few answers to its advice!

We believe that too many professors fail to realize that there is virtue in a certain amount of "bull."

We probably have lectured out of our knowledge here, for we have never taught school, but these are the things that trouble us, and we have given them sincere consideration. We simply believe that the majority of professors are pedagogically in Dr. Mayo's "eighteenth century life." We have aimed at no particular party, for we have had no certain person in mind in any of this writing. With no malice whatever, we voice our opinion. In brief it is this: that the majority of college professors who deplore the work of high school teachers, should turn the same X-ray on themselves—we wish for our high school "profs" sometimes.

While In Dallas

On most Corps trips, which have been undertaken in the past, certain cadets have advertised the school in a most unfavorable light with their imprudent conduct. Fortunately however, a flood of compliments regarding the good behavior of the majority has usually compensated. But—not always, and thus we make this suggestion:

It will be to the benefit of all concerned if those individuals who are habitually inclined to be careless, will exercise personal vigilance regarding their conduct, while in Dallas this week-end.

Dallas homes the officers of many large and important companies, the practice of which has been, in the past, to employ A and M graduates. The continuance of this favor may be affected to no small degree by the appearance of the Corps Saturday.

Let us hope that complaints will be small in number, and light in indictment.

Assembly Hall Bawlers

We have announced ourselves as being thoroughly opposed to grippers, and we are, but a student practice, which we consider most lamentable, has manifested itself lately that bids us do some griping on our own hook.

Some gentlemen on this campus (seemingly proud of lusty lungs) have taken it upon themselves to inform (with loud bawling) Assembly Hall audiences of their likes and dislikes, regarding the movie being shown. These oratorical geniuses are so effectively blatant; that we wonder the walls aren't ripped asunder from the vibration.

In the first place, we feel moved to inform these human foghorns that their opinion is not only unnecessary to the audience's enjoyment of the picture, but (we know it will surprise the wretches) is extremely repulsive, especially when delivered in such a crude and blustering manner.

Secondly, we pity fellows who waste their energy in such useless procedure. Where is the profit? In someone else's discomfort? If it is energy that just must be thrown away, we suggest that it be utilized in some purposeful endeavor. However, we hardly feel that that is the

M. I. T. Head Would Ask Science Subsidy

Cambridge, Mass.—"If the government is to raise barriers to big fortunes, it must be prepared to subsidize scientific research," Dr. Karl T. Compton, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, stated.

Dr. Compton pointed out that many researches that have led to great scientific discovery have been financed by men of wealth.

"Science is facing a serious problem," Dr. Compton stated in summary. "If there are to be no wealthy men to finance scientific research, then the money for it should come from the federal treasury."

BEAT S. M. U.

Is Our Slogan This Week

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reason. We haven't, as yet, heard any complaints against the brevity of yell practices.

Thirdly, we wish to remind these loud critics that such ridiculous conduct will only prove detrimental to their good standing while here.

This senseless yelling, we feel, is evidence of intellectual weakness, social selfishness, and most of all, lack of breeding.

D. L. Tisinger
INSURANCE
63 Mitchell



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