

## A NOTEWORTHY PROJECT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A real democracy must see that the chance for an elementary education is open to every man and woman. This is the first essential. But it is also essential that there should be the amplest opportunity for every kind of higher education. The education of the mass, while the most important problem in democratic education, is in no way or shape by and of itself sufficient. Democracy comes short of what it should be just to the extent that it fails to provide for the exceptional individual the highest kind of exceptional training; for democracy as a permanent world force must mean not only the raising of the general level but also the raising of the standards of excellence to which only exceptional individuals can attain. The table-land must be raised, but the high peaks must not be leveled down; on the contrary, they too must be raised. Highly important though it is that the masons and bricklayers should be excellent, it is nevertheless a grave mistake to suppose that any excellence in the bricklayers will enable us to dispense with architects.

In this country we have met better than in other countries the demand for general education, and there is now on foot a widespread and most useful and important agitation to better this type of general education by making it more practical, by making it more a training of the average boy and girl for what that average boy or girl must do in after life. The higher technical schools carry out the same purpose on a more advanced scale. Law schools, medical schools, agricultural institutes, engineering schools, and all similar schools for technical training are being improved and are increasing in numbers. The average State university takes its students as soon as they leave the high schools and gives them a technical training as a preparation for some professional or commercial career, and it does this on so large a scale and so successfully that the small, privately endowed college of the old type cannot in this field compete successfully with its great State-aided rival. The large private universities, especially in the East, which have no State support, have been forced to meet

this rivalry, and have been enabled to do so only by the extraordinary gifts which they have received from friends and alumni. Through these endowments new technical schools and professional and post-graduate courses have been established in profusion, and it is this fact that enables Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, and certain other similar private institutions to perform the work which the State universities also perform, by taking students from high schools and graduating them equipped to pursue a technical occupation.

It is to meet the state of affairs thus created that Messrs. E. Parmelee Prentice, Ellsworth G. Lancaster, and William G. Thayer, of the class of 1885 at Amherst, have as a committee prepared a plan which they have submitted to the trustees of that college. Their report is one of the most noteworthy of recent educational documents. In their opinion, Amherst at present has no place such as that which it filled fifty or even twenty-five years ago, when education was not of so technical a character, and when a college man was more representative of individual training and general culture than at present. As things are now, the high school fits for the university, and the university for the selected calling. Amherst, on the other hand, demands a preparation not within the tendencies of the high school, and gives a course of training which does not specially fit a man for any particular calling. Moreover, Amherst has not the means which will enable it much longer to compete on their own terms against the State universities and huge privately endowed universities. Either Amherst must be content to occupy an entirely secondary position in the educational field, or else it ought to occupy a no less entirely separate and distinctive portion of that field.

The three men who have signed the address then proceed to give the reasons why they believe that there is a distinctive field of the highest value which Amherst both can and ought to occupy. With equal boldness and wisdom, they advocate Amherst's frankly taking the position that it does not intend to have anything to do with that type of education—necessarily, much the most popular type—the appraisal of which is purely commercial, the

value of the training being measured by the income it returns. They insist that, in addition to this more ordinary and usually more necessary form of training, there is another which should be undergone simply for the sake of learning and for the benefit of the State; the kind of training which will help in giving to the State the incalculable benefits of a literature of the first rank and statesmanship of the first rank. For this purpose they believe that Amherst, so far from diminishing the attention given to classical training, should greatly increase it, modifying it from time to time, of course, to meet the demands of modern scholarship; and that for this purpose Amherst's aim should be to get the best teachers of the country in its own chosen field of work, and the ablest and most serious of the young men who desire to profit by such a course of teaching. They propose that Amherst shall frankly abandon the purely scientific part of collegiate work and stand for a liberal classical education, an education along the old lines, but better than could be obtained by the old methods; an education which will make Amherst of high value to the public by training statesmen and leaders of public thought in civics, in the history of government, in the development and significance of institutions, in the meaning of civilization. This education is, in Amherst, to be the substitute for the effort personally to equip a man for a trade.

The committee is careful to explain that it does not advocate the elimination of the sciences nor advocate the unchanged classical course of fifty years ago. A knowledge of science is part of a liberal education; but the science is to be taught so as to turn out, not an engineer, a chemist, an electrician, a biologist, but a man of broad general scientific as well as of broad general classical training. The committee also expressly disclaims any kind of criticism upon what is done by the average big university of to-day, and especially by the average State university. On the contrary, it explicitly recognizes the fact that technical education and trade education are essential to the work of the world, and that the vast development of the schools and universities in technical lines has been a public and

urgent necessity. But it insists, and quite rightly, that this does not meet all the demands of the world, and that different institutions can with profit to the public turn their attention in different directions. Its theory is that Amherst should stand for a cultural education, for one which will give breadth of view, which will fit a man not so much to be a leader in any one special calling as to be a leader of public thought; that the graduate of Amherst shall not be specially fitted for one vocation, but that his training shall have been such as to stand outside the straight line to pecuniary reward. There is room in our country for institutions of every kind, and the need for highly efficient technical schools does not imply that there is any less need than formerly for the highest and best type of classical education.

Accordingly the committee states that, in its judgment, Amherst should now completely cease the effort to compete in technical education with other institutions, and devote itself to the classical field of education—to what were once called the "humanities"—and that in this field it should endeavor to take a position as a leader. To accomplish this end, it advocates, first, that the faculty should be composed of the best teachers in the country for their chosen courses, and, second, that the body of students and the purpose and life of the college should be directed toward excellence in scholarship. The most fundamentally important part of the proposition is the proposal to stop all effort to increase the material equipment of the College, and, instead, to endeavor to increase the infinitely more important intellectual equipment by very largely raising the salaries of the instructors. Not only is the committee absolutely right in this proposition as regards Amherst, but what it says applies in only a less degree just as much to other institutions of learning. Altogether too much money has been put into bricks and mortar in our colleges compared to the amount that has been put into the salaries of the men who are to give the instruction. A really good university should have among its professors not only good teachers, but men of creative and productive scholarship. There are many such now. But

there ought to be many more. It is not necessary that teaching be made a conspicuously lucrative profession, but it is necessary that the compensation be not conspicuously low. A young man of ability with high ideals ought not to make money-making his first preoccupation. But he certainly and emphatically ought to insist upon an adequate salary, one sufficient to support his family and to enable him to associate with his equals on equal terms. A successful professor in a prominent college should occupy a position that will compare well in dignity with the position achieved by success in other occupations. The very low salaries of our college instructors and professors represent a fundamental National evil. There should be a fundamental change, and, as the committee says, in order to bring about this fundamental change what is needed is not a slight increase but a radically new standard of compensation. If Amherst would take the lead and in striking fashion inaugurate this new standard, that mere fact would at once give the College a commanding position of a unique kind.

In conclusion, the committee urges, to carry out its policy :

(1) That the instruction given at Amherst College be a modified classical course.

(2) That the degree of Bachelor of Science be abolished.

(3) That the College adopt the deliberate policy of devoting all its means to the indefinite increase of teachers' salaries.

(4) That the number of students attending the College be limited.

(5) That entrance be permitted only by competitive examination.

I am by no means sure that this fifth provision is wise ; and, in my judgment, the " classical course " should include also a wide sweep of general history and literature. But the propositions, taken together, represent a proposal which, though radical and startling in its novelty and in its utter divergence from the ordinary type of educational proposal, nevertheless, if put into effect, will mean far-reaching benefit to our National life. If Amherst College is willing and able substantially to adopt the suggestion of the committee, a great good will have been accomplished ; and in any event the committee is to be

congratulated for having so clearly set forth the principle which it is more essential for America than for any other nation effectually to realize.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.