

In this year the emphasis is upon social science and literature (seven and a half units in the social science group, and four and a half in the natural science).

The result of this orientation appears in the third and fourth years in the choice by the student of a major subject for intensive effort, and in an intelligent plan of study arranged with reference to his special needs and aptitudes. In these years lectures and formal class work are reduced to a minimum, but in the last year there is one "requirement" which is a novelty in the American college and of which the value may turn out to be surprising.

In the senior year there is held once a week in small sections (from five to ten students chosen from the various major fields) a two hour colloquium or symposium, intended to compel the student to think his way through to a unified, synthetic interpretation and philosophy of life—*his own*. One of the great weaknesses in our American educational program and one of the great causes of the lopsided and confused thinking of the average student, it is believed, is the failure to give every student before graduation an opportunity to think out for himself the interrelation of the various approaches to and interpretation of contemporary society—literary, historical, economic, biological, psychological, etc.—so that the average student of today thinks in compartments, without true perspectives and real understanding.

It will be perceived that the Reed College curriculum combines many of the special plans and devices which were described from various colleges in the College Number of the New Republic, October 25, 1922. The general introduction to contemporary civilization at Columbia, the individual treatment of the student's last two years at Smith, are both features of the Reed College plan. The admirable suggestion by President Meiklejohn of a method of enabling the student to unify the field of knowledge by means of an analytic course directed to finding a method of thought and giving him practice in it seems to be met in part by a course in mathematics, which "aims to familiarize students with methods of mathematical analysis or applied logic."

There are many other features of the Reed College curriculum upon which we should like to dwell because they bear directly upon the crying evils of the conventional machine-made college education. For instance, one of the glaring defects in what must be regarded as common practice, is the digesting of knowledge into summaries, handbooks, surveys by the use of which a student may gain an insecure hold of many facts about a subject without having any actual contact with the matter itself. At Reed textbooks are eliminated so far as possible, and instruction is given by direct contact between teacher and student in experiment and discussion. In addition increasing responsibility is thrown upon the student. "Independent and critical collateral reading not only

in English but in some one modern foreign language is required throughout the four years of college." "In both the freshman and sophomore years, out of the total time devoted by the student to the curricular studies, a definite portion is allowed the student for independent reading on a year's basis."

A very serious evil in our colleges arises from their usual organization in practically autonomous departments, which by their competitive practice contribute to that division of the field of knowledge by which the student's mind is deformed. The working of the Reed College curriculum obviously calls for the closest cooperation among instructors of different subjects. Clearly they must think in terms of the entire enterprise of education, and the contribution which each department can make to that enterprise must be subordinated to the plan of a whole.

The greatest and most patent evil of our colleges, their numbers and the unwieldy size of their classes, is met at Reed by the limitation of students to five hundred, so that teaching is restricted to small groups—in the last year one instructor to five or six students. This closeness of contact between teachers and students, in consequence of which both become partners in an effort defined by the unified curriculum, makes it possible to substitute for the commercial motive of amassing credits toward a degree, an appeal to voluntary, interested cooperation, and beyond this to enthusiastic initiative on the part of the student. "Instruction by discussion and consent" is the phrase used by President Scholz to describe the process; "to compel the student to do his own thinking" is his summing up of the end in view. Clearly the attainment of this object depends not only on the wisdom and skill with which the curriculum is organized but above all upon the personal quality of the teachers who employ it, their capacity of interpreting education "as an individual service rendered to individual minds."

Farmer and Laborer

THE farmers are discontented because they are not getting their just share of the national production. The workers are discontented because, with the exception of a small proportion of their number in favored trades, they are not getting wages sufficient to maintain even a modest American standard of living. The two classes are powerful numerically. If they would pool their interests and unite in a single political party they could easily dominate the nation and impose such policies as might alleviate their grievances.

But the pooling of the interests of farmers and laborers, it is often said, is impossible, for the reason that those interests are antagonistic. The farmer wants high prices for his products, but if

he gets them the laboring class of the cities will be confronted with a higher cost of living. The laborer wants higher wages, but if he gets them the cost of production will increase and the farmer will have to pay more for everything he buys. As for the possible alternative of taking enough away from the recipients of interest and profits to bring prosperity to both farmer and laborer, it is said to be impracticable. Considered by themselves, interest and profit make up an imposing sum of income. But relatively to the whole national income they are limited.

And an examination of the facts in the case seems at first to lend some color to this argument. According to the extremely competent analysis of the National Bureau of Economic Research, wages already absorb two-thirds or more of the net value product in the chief non-agricultural employments. In mines, quarries and oil wells the share of the employees in the net value product has ranged, in the decade 1909-1918, from 60.9 percent to 73.8 percent, with the average 69.8 percent. In factory production the range was from 68.7 to 78.1, with the average 76. In the construction industry the share of labor averaged 67.7 percent; in the transportation industries, 63.2 percent. Some part of the returns to property could perhaps be transferred to labor, thus making possible an increase in wages without increased production costs. But so long as we rely upon private enterprise to keep our machinery of production going it does not appear that very great inroads on the share of property can be made without affecting production adversely and cutting the real income of every class, whatever may happen to the percentages of net product.

Raise wages and some share of the increased cost, though not all of it, will be passed on to the farmer. Raise agricultural prices and some part of the burden will be passed on to the laborer. That is one aspect of the problem. But there is another that is more important.

The chief market for industrial products, outside of the circle of industry itself, is the farm. If the purchasing power in the hands of the farmers increases, the demand for industrial products necessarily increases. Vice versa, the industrial working population is the farmer's best market. A period of high wages and full employment reflects itself in a brisk demand for everything the farmer produces. In the last year vast quantities of fruit, potatoes and vegetables have gone to decay because the industrial population had not the means to pay the cost of gathering and transportation. Millions of industrial workers have been unable to find full time work because the agricultural population has had nothing to pay for their products. In this sense the interest of the farmer is bound up with that of the laborer. The prosperity of the one conditions that of the other.

Each must wish for the other good pay for work well done.

The farmer and the laborer have immediate interests in the price structure that harmonize as well as interests that conflict. They have one large group of interests in addition that are wholly in common. That lies in the elimination of waste in both production and distribution. Between the price that the farmer receives and that which the worker pays there is a margin which is often unnecessarily wide. The production price of an industrial product, out of which the worker is paid, falls far short of the price the farmer gives for the product. Both farmer and laborer would gain materially from the reduction of this margin to the lowest possible amount. Waste is the enemy of both. They can reduce it only by cooperation.

There is also another factor making for unity of interest. It is a serious matter to the farmer to find that his income is so low that he would be better off if he lost his farm and were thrown into the ranks of the city workers. He may envy the city workers and in his impatience may assert that their wages ought to come down. But in his rational moods he realizes that city employment is his refuge, or his son's refuge, if the farm can't be made to pay. And it is of great importance to the permanent interest of the farmer and his family that this refuge shall be something other than the misery of the sweatshop. Wealthy men of feudal instincts may urge the cutting of wages in industry for the sake of holding the farm boys in the country. The farm boys and their fathers will not think so well of this plan of stopping the migration to the city. If there is no better way of doing it, they would say, let the migration continue.

Farmer and laborer could stand together on an economic program including living prices for agricultural products, living wages for labor, the elimination of waste and of unemployment. Whether they can actually be brought together is another matter. There is an ancient tradition of hostility between the country worker and the city worker. When the harness galls a horse is apt to kick or bite his mate, instead of the driver. In that respect the horse is pretty human. There is also the effect of propaganda carried on by those who have the best reasons for keeping the two apart. It is easy to slip into the farm journals a diatribe against the exorbitant demands of labor. No great effort is required to excite the industrial worker against the alleged greed of the farmer.

But there is evidence of a great change in the attitude of the farmers and the workers toward each other. All the agitation for a farmer labor party, and the occasional political successes of the movement, work toward an understanding of common interests. The farm press is exhibiting on the whole an increasingly sympathetic attitude toward labor, and the labor press is giving evidence of an

increasing interest in the farmer's problem. Where the cooperative movement is making head there is rapid progress toward mutual understanding. It is worth bearing in mind that in countries like Denmark, where cooperation has permeated the whole economic structure, there is no conflict between the farmers and the laborers. On the contrary, they work together politically, to the great advantage of both.

We do not assert that the time is already ripe for an effective farmer-labor combination in American politics. We do not know whether it is or not. The unknown factors in the problem are too numerous to solve through the equations we can constitute on the basis of established fact. But so much appears certain: There is no inherent conflict of economic interest that renders such a combination impracticable. Neither is there any insurmountable barrier in temperament or conception of life. Given an adequate program and energetic leadership, a party representing the farmers and laborers would grow rapidly and go far.

Always Frightened

WE are sorry that our welcome to the Moscow Art Theatre must be tinged with apology. We are rather ashamed to tell these visitors that our welcome to them was not unanimous, as it should have been; that in the great crowd waiting to receive what is perhaps the best theatre in the world one small boy should have made himself conspicuous by sticking out his tongue and yelling dismal, stupid, insulting nonsense.

The small boy is of course the American Defense Society.

The American Defense Society didn't want the Moscow Art Theatre to play here, arguing that the Moscow Art Theatre is sure to spread Soviet propaganda among us because all the artists of the company have agreed not to talk against the Soviets and because special preference will be shown by the Soviets to those artists who have agreed to talk in favor of it. As further proof of this covert raid on the stability of our government the Defense Society advances a clause in the artists' contract by which they agree to return to Russia at the end of their leave, and another clause by which they agree to turn over a third of their earnings to the state.

The American Defense Society is afraid that one-third of the receipts of an eight weeks' run will supply the Soviet government with enough cash to overthrow the constitution and all the amendments. Does it appeal to Washington to stop this flow of gold? No, it calls in the private detectives: "If the American Legion takes the action toward this theatrical tour that it recently took in the case of Mme. Gadski, it may seriously

interfere with the expected returns to the Russian government."

Had the American Defense Society any sense, it would take no further action until it had examined two plays by Chehov which the Art Theatre is going to give. For these plays, *The Cherry Orchard* and *Three Sisters*, are full of the most vicious and subtle red propaganda, full of passages which would enormously strengthen the case of the Defense Society.

In *The Cherry Orchard* we find Gayef saying "off the white in the corner; chip the red in the middle pocket," and again, "I'm a financier . . . red in the middle."

In *Three Sisters*, Masha, obviously seeking to destroy one of our most cherished constitutional amendments, exclaims: "Let's all get drunk and make life purple for once;" and Andrey poisons the basic institution of our society with the words "One shouldn't marry. One shouldn't, because it's dull."

But the most dangerous propaganda of all is from Vershinin (in *Three Sisters*):

In two or three hundred years' time, life on this earth will be unimaginably beautiful and wonderful. Mankind needs such a life, and if it is not ours today then we must look ahead for it, wait, think, prepare for it.

If the members of the American Defense Society listen carefully to *The Cherry Orchard*, they will realize that Dunyasha is talking not about herself, but about them when she says:

I am afraid of everything. I am always frightened.

Let that be the motto of the American Defense Society.

And now let's try to forget it.

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