

5. The strong points in favor of this plan are:

(1) The course of study has the highest educational value—a fact, surely, of the first importance.

(2) It enjoys the advantage that is always urged in favor of the class or year system that it fosters a desirable *esprit de corps*, and so furnishes a powerful stimulus to the student to keep up with his year.

6. Its weak points are:

(1) All men, however they may differ in preparation and aptitude for study, are assigned the same tasks. Strong and weak must pull the same load. It becomes galling to the man who is slow but sure, and sets a rather high premium on the student who can learn quickly, though he may be the other's inferior in real ability.

(2) In its low pass mark it disregards the fundamental principle that thoroughness in work is essential to the highest mental discipline.

(3) It discourages the slow student who is impatient with superficiality, and so robs him of the buoyancy of spirit and delight in his work which he might have under more favorable conditions. On the other hand, it may compel others to spend four years on that which they could advantageously do in three.

These three are inseparable from the year system.

(4) It involves hardship for students who, though strong in most departments, are hopelessly weak in one. For example, a student might be debarred from graduation by exceptional inability to learn mathematics, although, be it said, such exceptional cases may be met by a little practical good sense.

II. *The Northern Elective System.*

1. This differs from the foregoing in offering an extensive system of options. Two observations should be made in order to make clear the nature of the changes involved.

(1) Instead of one fixed course a large number of courses are offered. A large University like Harvard, with such a system, becomes little more than a congeries of small colleges, each with a small staff of teachers and a small attendance of students.