

# FEATURE PAGE

## On Universities

By Grant Campbell

"Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them and wise men use them," wrote Bacon. At no time could this be more pertinently said of universities than today when their responsibilities are heavier and their opportunities greater than ever before. They are constantly "contemned" for being visionary, impractical and out of touch with the "real world."

The oldest fallacy about schooling is to suppose that it can train a man for "practical" life. Inevitably, while the plan of study is being taught, "practical" life has moved on. No employer who knows anything about men will value a beginner because he knows the ropes of a particular changeable routine. It would be as sensible to require that new comers know the floor plan of the factory ahead of time.

Universities, especially our own, have suffered severely from Spencer's conception of education as the adjustment of the individual to his environment. It is a dead, mechanical definition, distasteful to every creative spirit; it subordinates civilization to industry, biology to physics and manners and morals to wealth. An education that is purely scientific, technical and "practical" makes a mere tool of its product, it leaves him a stranger to beauty and gives him powers that are divorced from wisdoms. The reassuring factuality of it calls not for reflection, only for absorption. It highly trains practitioners, without perceptibly lessening ignorance, prejudice or dullness.

Its worst danger is the creation of a large powerful and complacent class of college-trained uneducated men at the very heart of our industrial and political system. Some corporations employing the largest number of engineers and scientific research men are not thus deluded. One such firm conducted a survey not long ago to find out where and how its first rate executives had been prepared. They came from the most unexpected places—including small liberal arts colleges, the teaching profession, the stage, and the Baptist ministry. It was found that the engineering schools—particularly those sensible ones who make no pretense of intellectual nonsense—turned out a good average product, but few leaders. The company's own institutes and night courses raised the chance of foremen and district managers—but only up to a point. The survey concluded that what was wanted as material to shape future executives was graduates of liberal arts colleges trained in history and economics, in philosophy and in good English and likewise possessed of an intelligent interest in science and technology.

The simple man expects education to do everything that the rest of the world leaves undone. Under new management, American History is to produce patriots—nothing to lessen the divorce rate; another asks that education root out racial intolerance. (In what grade, I wonder?). Education in the present confused sense of the word, is synonymous with civilization.

North Americans have a naive

faith in education—but it must bring prestige and it must be short and sweet. Dogs receive short courses in good manners, and are emulated by girls from the age of seven who learn Poise and Personality. There are educational shops for repairing every deficiency in man or nature. You may, indeed must, teach arc-welding in two weeks during war time, but education is a life-long discipline of the individual by himself, encouraged by a reasonable opportunity to lead a good life. "All education is an arch where through gleams that untravelled way whose margin fades, forever and forever as I move," to misquote Tennyson.

The purpose of a University is to conserve the knowledge of the past, extend it and transmit it to the future. It aims to present the True, the Beautiful, and the Good. How can these best be made available to successive generations of "wise men?" There are two habits necessary to pursuing and possessing knowledge. One is thinking, the other is attention. The ability to think like all gifts of nature cannot be imparted, it can only be developed. To learn to think while being taught involves paying attention. Nothing is more rare. Listening seems the hardest thing in the world and misunderstanding the easiest. Even some people who believe themselves well bred and highly educated have fidgety ears; their span of attention is as short as the mating of a fly.

Only law schools teach students to read, to write, to speak. I mean the simple clear kind that everyone demands—from others. A student in college must be inspired of perception combined with the utmost artistry of expression. The two merge and develop the sense of good workmanship, of preference, for quality and truth which is the chief mark of the genuinely educated man. In writing and main things to be taught. One grows naturally out of diction—of words that live. With a great intolerance towards "split infinitives" and other trivialities or vulgarities (which do not effect style or thought in the slightest)—usually goes a remarkable insensitivity to jargon and inflated nonsense.

An insatiable mental curiosity should be stimulated, in university, which can only be satisfied by the habits of reading, which once acquired will last for life. To read, without haste, the books which are approved and sanctioned by that severest of critics and surest of compilers.—Time, is to receive a liberal education. If a student absorbs the life and letters of the Periclean age the Renaissance and the Enlightenment together with the best modern works, he may enter that Country of the Mind where all remembered geniuses still live and teach.

History, the humanizing faculty par excellence, if properly taught does not offer brisk formulas for human behavior or pat answers to social problems as do many of the ersatz substitutes (e. g. sociology) recently put forward to supplant it. Teaching should attempt to organize facts and biographies and project them so that they resemble life.

There is a sense of history which familiar handling develops, much akin to that by which the lumberman knows wood. When broadly based on a good knowledge of Western European History (including that of the United States) this historical sense is a comforter and guide. The possessor understands his neighbors, his government and the limitations of mankind much better. He knows more clearly not what is desirable, but what is possible. He becomes practical in the lasting sense of being taken in neither by panicky fears—nor second-rate Utopias. It is a moderator which insists on knowing conditions before passing judgment, on distinguishing between the relative values of facts and truth.

Mathematics should include a sound basis of number theory so that one is not dealing with voodoo symbols. Being one of the logical sciences it should be taught in conjunction with informal elementary logic. The curiosity about inference and deduction is evident in the popularity of detective stories and parlor stories. Once roused, this interest can bear good fruit. A flair for detecting fallacies is excellent protection in a world that swarms with them.

How many students will devote their lives to research in pure science? As citizens, however, they must not simply gape at the wonders of science but must understand enough of its principles to criticize and evaluate the results. Survey courses are out of the question. They are superficial and bewildering—but an intelligent introduction to principles can be given. (1) "If students leave college thinking, as they usually do, that science offers a full, accurate and literal description of man and Nature; if they think scientific research by itself yields final answers to social problems; if they think that scientists are the only patient, honest workers in the world and that Copernicus, Galileo, Newton and Faraday were unimaginative plodders like many of their own instructors; if they think that theories spring from facts and that scientific authority is at any time infallible, then they have wasted their time in the science lecture room.

If they think the ability to write symbols and read manometers is fair grounds for superiority and pride, if they think science steadily and automatically makes for a better world—then they are a plain menace to the society to which they belong.

Lastly, no university course is complete without philosophy, which integrates all knowledge and gives meaning to life. If one follows philosophy, he may at last arrive at a faith which satisfies. At least he can learn—(2) "To live content with small means; to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy not respectable; and wealthy, not rich; to study hard, to think quietly, talk gently, act frankly; to listen to the stars and birds to bees and sages, with open heart; to bear all cheerfully, do all bravely, await occasions, hurry never; in a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious grow up through the common." Is not this to know true happiness?

- Quotations:
1. "Teacher in America" Barzun.
  2. Richard Canning F. M. of England.

## PACKS

Beyond the range of roads and civilization in our vast north land, the canoe is the general means of transportation as is the pack train in the mountains and plains of the West. As each of these topics deserves a book by itself, I shall restrict this article to back-packs used when travelling afoot. The man who goes afoot, prepared to camp anywhere and in any weather is the most independent fellow on earth. He can obey the whim of the hour, do what he pleases whenever he pleases without deference to anybody, or care for any beast of burden or obedience to the course of any current. He is footloose and free. Where neither horse nor boat can go, he can go, using country that no other kind of traveller ever sees. And it is just those otherwise inaccessible places that have the strongest lure for anyone who delights in new discovery, in unspoiled nature, and in the charms of primitive society.

The perfect all-round pack is a myth, like the perfect all-round gun. The sporting-goods stores and outfitters provide a bewildering assortment of types and sizes. Therefore I'll just state the main principles which should guide the nomadic tyro in selecting a suitable pack, and describe some of the more useful types.

### CHOOSE LARGE PACK

First, a pack should be large enough to accommodate your hiking requisites. Avoid "flip-flops" and "stick-outs" in your equipment. Suppose you have to cross a stream or deep gully on a fallen tree. If there is a dangling article about you, such as a hat, it will swing to one side and tend to throw you off balance. If anything sticks out of your pack, or is tied on the outside of it, the thing will everlastingly be catching in vines and bushes. Taking it day in and day out, in all kinds of country, the best pack is a commodious sack on your back that contains everything you carry except what goes in your pockets and in your hand.

Many packs are too wide and too short. A pack if too wide interferes with the backward swing of your arms and if too short it presses hard against the small of the back, which is the worst of all places to put a strain on. The pack-sack should be long enough to rest on the big pelvic bones at the base of the spinal column and wide enough at the top to be easy to pack and unpack.

A pack-sack when empty is roughly rectangular in shape. If the carrying straps are attached to the two top corners of the rectangle, they drag on the weakest part of the shoulders, next to the arms, and they tend to slip down over the arms, and need to be continually "hoisted" on the hike. So that the strain will come nearer the neck, where the vertebral column will help to support it, the pack-sack should be suspended from the centre at the top of the pack.

Tight web shoulder straps are an unmitigated nuisance: They wrinkle up and cut like ropes. Get good

quality, stout leather straps, at least two inches wide where they pass over the shoulders and tapered to about an inch where they pass under the armpits.

Finally, avoid all cross-straps, blanket rolls or haversack slings which compress the chest and interfere with breathing.

### RUCKSACK IS FAVORITE

From time immemorial the chamois hunters of the Alps have used a simple but ingenious pack for carrying light kits and game. This rucksack is today the favorite packing device tourists and mountaineers on the Continent and is much used in our country as a game bag, for day-long hikes, light mountaineering and skiing and for walking trips in settled regions.

In its original form the rucksack as an open-mouthed bag of light cloth closed by a puckering cord. In tourist's patterns the opening is protected from dust and rain by a flap and one or two covered outside pockets are usually added. The rucksack is distinguished from all other packs by the method of attaching its shoulder straps, which swing directly from the puckering cord at the top, and are fastened below by toggles, hooks or buckles.

Since the rucksack is made of light cloth with no stiffening it is very capacious for its weight; one that holds half a bushel (size when empty 18" x 24", weight about one pound) can be rolled up and tucked into the pocket of a hunting coat. The plain rucksack without flap, is simple to make and easy to get into, since all you have to do is to pull one end of the puckering cord and the bag is wide open. This makes it handy as a game bag. The weight, being carried low and tight against the body, does not tend to over-balance one in difficult climbing—a point of consequence to mountaineers. The rucksack is the ideal contrivance for carrying the day's necessities when you are reasonably sure of reaching a house or camp at night, being never in the way like a haversack or blanket-roll, yet lighter and more capacious. In it, the hunter, prospector, hicker, etc. may carry his mackinaw stag shirt when actively exercising, his lunch, a kettle for tea, a hand-axe, camera, etc., but for packs over 15 pounds, it is unsatisfactory. Its contents bunch up into a rounded lump and heavy articles work to the bottom.

### HOT WEATHER HIKING

When hiking in hot weather, the rucksack is apt to feel like a poultice on your back, so frames are used (continued on page seven)

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