EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

THE NEED OF SOLITUDE
IN COLLEGE

The need for solitude in the midst of the activities of college life was stressed by Chancellor Elmer Ellsworth Brown of New York University in an address to the students of the College of Arts and College of Engineering at University Heights at the opening of the fall session.

“You will hear much said about society,” Chancellor Brown said. “You will be told that association with other men is the main thing in your college life, that to play your part with men is the main outcome of college life. That is all of it true. But my thought is that you are to have within you a refuge, where you can be alone, even in the midst of the crowd; and that you shall put that retreat to a worthy use, which the crowd can neither give nor take away.

“You have all of you passed our intelligence tests. But what a college we should have, what classes, what athletics, what fraternities, dramatics, journalism; what a country we should have, what industry, what institutions, politics, and social life, if every man among us brought to his corporate and cooperative life some fruit of the spirit, serenely ripened in the walled garden of his inner life.

“His secret dealings with truth, ambition, and beauty; his reading of books and his thought of what he has read; the amusement and the inspiration he may find in after-thoughts of his intercourse with men; and the inner resource, the waters drawn from the springs of unselfish affection.

“It is in the light of the religious recluse that the cultivation of solitude reaches its highest pitch of intensity—its best and worst. I have no thought of prompting a college student to be a recluse of any kind. But I say nevertheless that the best and ablest among you will develop the power of withdrawal from the world on occasion, for the freshening of your lives. The philosophical thinker must do his best thinking alone. The master of scientific research must have this power.

Citing the new translation of Petrarch’s Life of Solitude, Chancellor Brown spoke of the necessity for an acquaintance with the master works of human art and thinking in order to meet one of the most modern and insistent needs of practical life—the need of understanding men.

“You can know men jauntily without such aid,” he said. “But I doubt whether any man can know his fellow-man truly, save as he discovers him through a knowledge of mankind. How can you sense his quality and motives, unless you know something of those enduring qualities and motives which have lived through the life of the ages? How can you praise them, without knowing the higher levels which humanity has from time to time achieved? A wide and appreciative acquaintance with this achievement is what is known as a liberal education.

“Let me remind you that the supreme association of college life is that of students with teachers. While you are in college, it is your privilege to know these men and to be their fellow students.”
CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS BETTER THAN SMALL SCHOOLS

Comparing costs and results of education in consolidated and in one-teacher schools in Connecticut shows that 29 per cent of pupils 14 years of age in one-room schools drop out during the school year, but only 8 per cent in consolidated schools drop out; 41 per cent of those 15 years of age in one-room schools drop out, as compared with 12 per cent in consolidated schools. The percentage of elimination in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades of one-teacher schools is approximately twice as great as in the same grades in consolidated schools. Of the teachers in one-teacher schools, 23 per cent have had two years or more of professional training, compared with 49 per cent in consolidated schools; and teachers in consolidated schools have on the average two years more experience than those in one-teacher schools.—School Life.

LIBRARY TRAINING

A school for the training of colored librarians has been established at Hampton Institute, with the approval and cooperation of the officers of the American Library Association, the Carnegie Corporation, and the General Education Board. Work began September 24, 1925.

The work of the school will be upon the collegiate level, and students will be given opportunity to qualify for the degree of Bachelor of Science. The Huntington Library of over 50,000 volumes will be used as the school laboratory.

INSURING GROWTH

Since in reality there is nothing to which growth is relative save more growth, there is nothing to which education is subordinate save more education. It is a commonplace to say that education should not cease when one leaves school. The point of this commonplace is that the purpose of school education is to insure the continuance of education by organizing the power that insures growth. The inclination to learn from life itself and to make the conditions of life such that all will learn in the process of living is the finest product of schooling.

—John Dewey.

Rural vacation schools were maintained last summer in 24 Virginia counties, with an enrollment of 3,847. Among the students were men and women past 50 learning to read and write, and because of their zeal they made remarkable progress in a four to six weeks’ term, with a study period of only two hours a day.

A 12 months’ public school session in Arlington County has been authorized by the Virginia State Board of Education. It is an experiment which may be the beginning of an all-year-round school policy in Virginia.