

THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

CALLING UP WORTHY RESPONSES

Commenting on the late great Dean Briggs of Harvard, who served also as president of Radcliffe College, Stuart P. Sherman once remarked that his success as an administrator seemed to have been due to his "evocation of worthy responses" by humanizing his job. "In him one never felt the official," wrote Sherman.

This remark applies even more truly to the classroom teacher than it does to the administrator; it is assuredly fact that evocation of worthy responses is stimulated by the human quality of the teacher. Indeed one wonders if this is not the very secret of personality—calling up worthy responses in one's fellows, whoever they may be.

So Sherman described Dean Briggs and made us feel his warming personality: "Touching him, men got a tone, got a tune, which they maintained all day—and long after. 'Hello there! I'm glad to see you back. Sit down—at least for a minute.' Immediately, and for as long as you were there, you and your interests were treated by him as if they were the central affairs in the universe—just as everyone wants his own toothache treated."

A TEACHER'S PRAYER

MAY I not be impatient with the spirited life of youth about me,—remembering that its joys, in cheerful yesterdays, were mine also. May I mark well my words, knowing that the effect of a single sentence, dropped into the heart of youth, may be very great and remain when I am gone. Though I may be limited to certain lines of instruction, may I venture as far as I dare upon the highway of brotherhood, teaching that the great success is not what one may possess, but what one may become; and that the new triumph, in the arts as in commerce, is service to humanity. Lest I drift too far out on the pleasant waters of theory, may I be reminded of the needs of daily life; for though the mind wander in the mobile land of dreams, the feet must still tread the solid earth. Whatever else I do or forbear, may I instill a gentler life, a calmer activity, and a saner purpose into at least a few who will carry the burdens of the generation dawning. And however long I remain amid these surroundings, may my daily task not exhaust my spirit; but may the ever-coming stream of new life keep me cheerful and young in heart. As I become less a student of books, year by year may the great book of experience yield its wisdom to me, may it deny me nothing that shall enlarge my sympathy for humanity and my gratitude for the gift of life. And lastly, may my students still kindly remember me when they are knocking at the golden castles of their hearts' desire on the rough highways of life.

MAX EHRMANN

A CHALLENGE

Modern civilization seems to be incapable of producing people endowed with imagination, intelligence, and courage. In practically every country there is a decrease in the intellectual and moral calibre of those who carry the responsibility of public affairs.—ALEXIS CARREL.