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 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.