

Facing Our Opportunities

BY HOMER A. KENT, '24

The charge is oftentimes thrust at the present day college student that he is not making the most of his opportunities. It is said that he is gliding along upon flowery beds of ease but failing to realize the value of and to make the best use of the privileges afforded him in college. How are we to meet such a charge? Can we refute it? There must have been considerable tingling of ears at Berkeley not so long ago when Professor C. L. Montgomery of the English Department, told a class of students of both sexes that there are seven thousand students in the University of California "who should be attached to the handle of a pick or a frying pan" instead of passing their time carelessly about the halls of that institution." He is quoted as saying that seventy per cent of the University's ten thousand students are "more interested in dancing than in pursuing the subtleties of Shakespeare and Chaucer. They are out for a good time, and the education is merely incidental.

This virulent educator favors raising scholarship standards so that graduation could only be the result of high scholastic attainment. Furthermore, he would weed out the triflers among the student body, those who are in school merely because it is a popular thing to do or because their parents have sufficient funds to see them thru and they see therein a chance for a good time. Those apart from high ideals of intellectual attainment and preparation for a life of worthwhile service would be debarred from entering the portals of a school, which according to him would be ideal.

It is, indeed, a bold statement which this pedagogue has presented an unsuspecting student body. The public has a right to ask and to know if these assertions are cold facts. Are they the truth or the mere bickerings of an ill-informed pessimist? If they are not true Professor Montgomery should be severely challenged, but if they are true then, indeed, some

sweeping reforms in scholastic standings should be made at Berkeley. And if such conditions exist at Berkeley may it not be that they occur elsewhere among the institutions of higher learning in our land. We may do well to look to ourselves and see whether or not we have erred in this regard and if so to cleanse the inside of our cup and platter. We, who today are enjoying this opportunity of attending a school of learning are in a very real sense, members of a select circle. We are, so to speak, a picked group. We are being prepared to take our places in the onward movement of the world as leaders of a great multitude of mankind, which has not had the like opportunities that have been ours. The world, now as ever, is reaching out after efficient leadership. The great majority must learn to be good followers but it is for the better trained to lead the way, to mark out the pathway for others to tread. Therefore the college man or woman should become a leader in whatever field he or she may have been called to enter. Will we be able to fill the place justly required of us because of our generous opportunities? Are we adequately preparing ourselves today for tomorrow? We must answer these questions for ourselves.

More numbers of students enrolled do not make a University or a College great. It is the quality of the scholarship required, the scholastic achievements of the students and their ability to make good in the world, rather than the numbers on the rolls, which truly glorify an institution of learning.

Visitor at Penitentiary: "And what brought you to this place, my good man?"

Convict: "Well, lady, my trouble started from attending too many weddings."

Visitor: "I see. You learned to drink there, or steal, perhaps?"

Convict: "Not exactly that, lady. You see, I was always the bridegroom."

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