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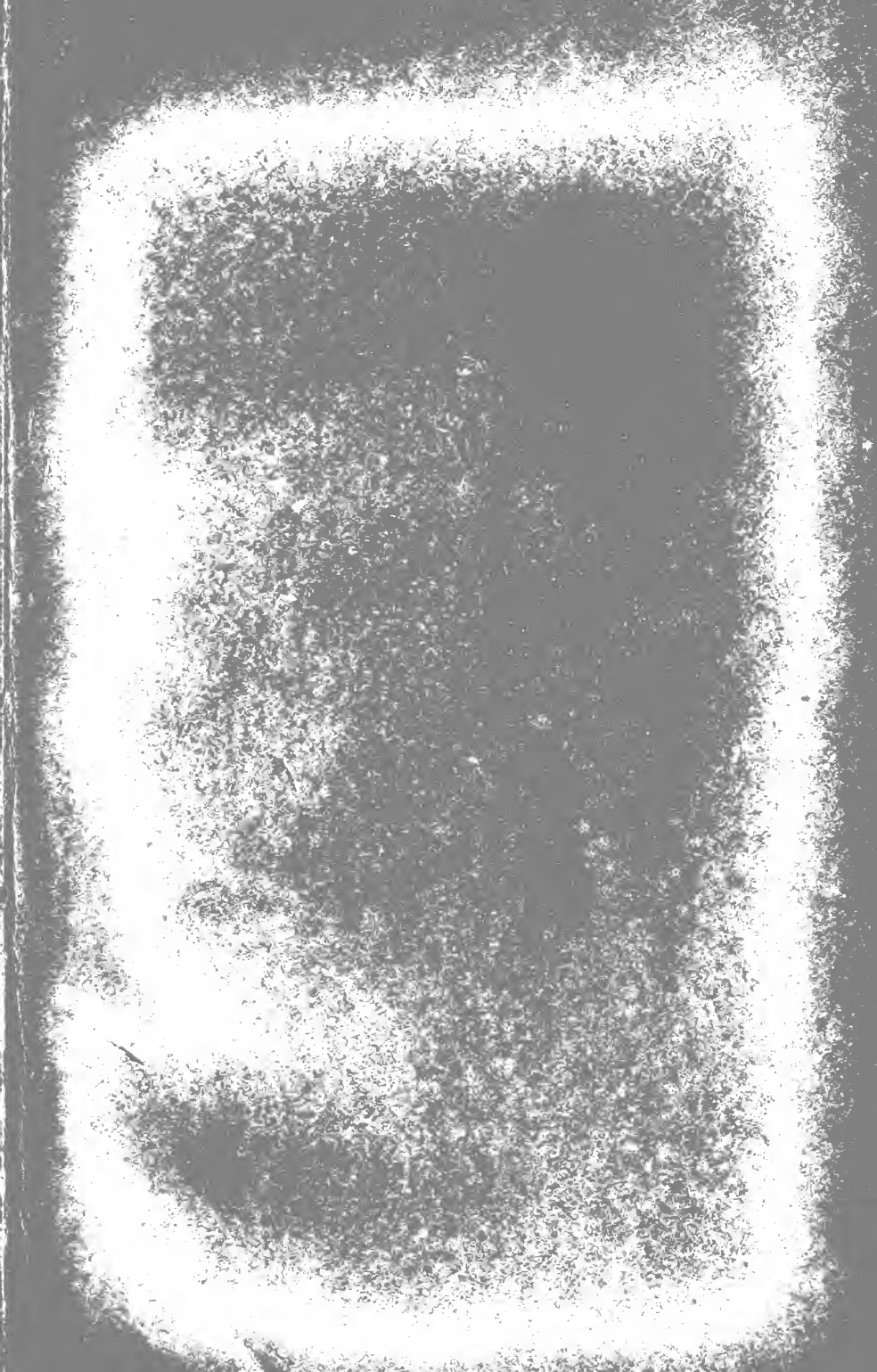
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THE LENGTH OF THE COLLEGE COURSE
AND ITS
RELATION TO THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

*Papers read before the Department of Higher Education
of the National Educational Association
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I

THE BACCALAUREATE COURSE IN ITS RELATION TO THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS ¹

It is not easy to set forth in few words the relation of the colonial colleges to preparation for professional life. Not much of the instruction which they offered was technically professional. Yet the professional bent was stronger in them than in the colleges of a later day. Colleges were for the service of God in church and commonwealth, and that service was to be rendered thru the professional and governmental activities of the alumni. It is not too much to say that the college course was regarded as the first, undifferentiated stage of professional training.

The profession chiefly in view was, of course, the Christian ministry. A few subjects in divinity, of a pretty distinct and technical sort, found their way into the general college curriculum, and were pursued, willy-nilly, by students who were preparing for other than the ministerial calling. A large part of the immediate preparation for ordination, however, was made by young theological students thru private reading, and practice in sermonizing under the direction of some ministerial friend engaged in an active pastorate. So the prospective physician learned of a practicing physician, the prospective lawyer of a practicing attorney. And all three, if their training was ideally complete, had taken the same classical and philosophi-

¹ A paper read before the Department of Higher Education of the National Educational Association, at Boston, Mass., July 7, 1903.

cal course in college as the groundwork of their professional education.

The colonial view in its most extreme form was set forth by President Clap of Yale College, in his *Religious constitution of Colleges*, published in 1754. "Colleges," he said, "are *Religious Societies*, of a Superior Nature to all others. For whereas Parishes, are Societies, for training up the *Common People*; Colleges, are Societies of Ministers, for training up Persons for the Work of the *Ministry*. . . Some indeed, have supposed, that, the only design of Colleges, was to teach the Arts, and Sciences. . . But it is probable, that there is not a College, to be found upon Earth, upon such a Constitution."

On the other hand, an advanced colonial view was expressed by William Smith, D. D., Provost of the College of Philadelphia, in his *General view of the College of Mirania*, an ideal sketch, published in 1753, as a suggestion relative to the college then projected for the Province of New York. "The Miranians," according to this account, "divide the whole body of people into two grand classes. The first consists of those designed for the learned professions; by which they understand *divinity, law, physic*, and the chief offices of the state. The second class consists of those designed for the mechanic professions, and all the remaining people of the country." The Miranians show their liberality by providing a good education for this second class up to the age of fifteen. But college training is reserved for those of the former class. Beginning at the age of six, all are trained alike for the first three years. Then those intended for college pass thru a five-years course in a Latin school. They are ready for college at the age of fourteen, and their college course is five years in length, the first year being devoted chiefly to Greek, the second to Mathematics, the third to Philosophy, the fourth to Rhetoric and Poetry, and the fifth to Agriculture and History.

If it was difficult to characterize briefly the colonial ideal of higher education, it is hardly easier to trace the subtle change which came over this ideal and gave us the typical American college of the nineteenth century. In both Europe and Amer-

ica, the Revolutionary Age brought forth a new estimate of human worth, as human, and a new demand for a purely humane culture. We cannot even attempt at this time to unravel the influences, religious, scientific, literary, revolutionary, which led to these shiftings of emphasis. But the distinctive college ideal of the nineteenth century was the ideal of purely liberal culture, in one of the noblest forms in which that conception has appeared in the history of human thought. If this lofty idealism dwelt overmuch in the thin air of academic abstraction, it none the less called out upon its heights a devoted and enthusiastic following. The ideal of the colleges became the ideal of the academies. Somewhat modified, it reappeared in the common schools; and the American people, with marvelous unanimity, embraced this common faith and purpose, that education shall be first and chiefly for manhood, irrespective of differences of family history, or of prospective occupation. Thru the greater part of the nineteenth century, accordingly, we saw general, that is, liberal education in the ascendency; and professional education rising indeed, but slowly and painfully. Professional schools had come into existence in large numbers, and were more and more largely attended. But their educational character was hardly taken seriously, and their courses of instruction were looked upon as only a slight improvement on the system of apprenticeship. An increasing number of students entered upon professional studies without having taken any part of the college course.² There had come to be an unmistakable rift between studies for culture and studies for vocation.

² The *American Almanac* for 1842 contained a list of 101 colleges, 39 theological seminaries, 10 law schools, and 31 medical schools in the United States. Cf., Wayland, *Present collegiate system*, etc., p. 8. Dr. Wayland goes on to say, "I rather fear that the impression is gaining ground that this [college] preparation is not essential to success in professional study. A large proportion of our medical students are not graduates. The proportion of law students of the same class is, I rather think, increasing. The proportion of students for the ministry who resort to college is much larger than formerly" (*Op. cit.*, p. 153).

In 1890 it was estimated that 8 per cent. of the medical students, 18 per cent. of the law students, and 23 per cent. of the theological students of the whole country had taken a degree in arts or science. *Report of a special committee* (of the Board of Overseers of Harvard University), p. 12.

The old college course was for a long time but little changed; but insensibly it had come to be prescribed for culture rather than as preparation for the professions.

Out of the enormous literature relating to the American college, which the nineteenth century brought forth, we may take, as a single representative, the *Thoughts on the present collegiate system of the United States* of Francis Wayland, published in 1842. This work is of great historical value, because of the detailed account which it presents of the actual college administration of that day; and in its recommendations concerning improvements, moreover, it is prophetic of some of the best things in our later college history. "No nation," said President Wayland, "can derive the benefit which God intended from the intellect which he has conferred upon it, unless all that intellect, of what sort soever it be, have the means of full and adequate development." But the colleges as then conducted he declared to be "*merely schools preparatory to entrance upon some one of the professions.*" He continues: "In consequence of this unintentional restriction, a very large class of our people have been deprived of all participation in the benefits of higher education. It has been almost impossible in this country, for the merchant, the mechanic, the manufacturer, to educate his son, beyond the course of a common academy unless he gave him the education preparatory for a profession." At the same time, an increasing number were entering the professional schools without this preliminary college training. The colleges were not in close touch with the after-life of their graduates. "The college or university forms no integral and necessary part of the social system. . . . In no other country is the whole plan for the instruction of the young so entirely dis severed from connexion with the business of subsequent life."

It was this state of affairs which President Wayland would remedy. "Let the college be the grand center of intelligence to all classes and conditions of men, diffusing among all the light of every kind of knowledge, and approving itself to the best feelings of every class of the community." To this end, he would raise the requirements for admission, thus securing

students of a more uniform and more advanced age. To this improved student body he would offer an improved college course, one of the suggested changes being the provision of a course parallel with that in arts, leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science or of Literature. "The question will here be asked, What are we to do with the four-year course? I answer, it seems to me of but very little consequence whether we do with it or without it. . . I certainly would not have the period curtailed commencing with the present, or even with much higher requirements for admission to the university. But I would not have it a matter of time."

We will pause here to consider briefly the place which the baccalaureate course has occupied on the scale of years of college-men's lives, thru our educational history. Harvard College settled down at a very early day to a four-year course, and from that time on the quadrennium was so nearly universal in the practice of our colleges that there is no need to seek for occasional exceptions.³ For generations, this was the most rigid time-allotment to be found anywhere in our educational system. When we came to have professional schools, they were for a long time without any common standards. Below the college, the preparatory schools were likewise variable. The courses were largely determined by college-admission requirements, and only gradually shaped themselves into another four-year curriculum.

No extended inquiry has yet been made, so far as I can learn, into the actual ages of colonial college boys. We know that well-endowed students were occasionally graduated in their teens—in some instances before they were half thru their teens. These last were probably exceptional cases. The significant fact is that, however rigid the college course, the loose organization of the secondary schools made such early graduation possible.⁴

³ Yale College had a very early provision under which the course might be shortened, but it seems not to have been carried into effect. The course of the College of Philadelphia, before the Revolution, was three years in length. More recently the undergraduate course at Johns Hopkins University has been a three years' course.

⁴ President F. A. P. Barnard, of Columbia College, in his *Annual Report* of

For the period since the Revolution, we have now at hand the results of an extended inquiry made by Mr. Thomas.⁵ Full statistics were found to be available for only eleven institutions. The list does not include any of the greater universities of the country, but is made up of smaller universities and representative colleges, seven of them in New York and New England, one in the South, and three in the Middle West. These statistics show in the period from the Revolution to the middle of the nineteenth century, but little marked deviation from the standards of more recent times.⁶ Mr. Thomas has analyzed with especial care the records of the past fifty years. It appears from his summary that, half a century ago, the median age of graduation from these eleven institutions ranged from twenty years and seven months, at New York University, to twenty-five years and two months, at Oberlin. During the last full decade, 1890-99, the range is less great, extending from twenty years and two months, at the University of Alabama, to twenty-three years and eleven months, at Oberlin College and Syracuse University. One institution, at the end of the half-century, was where it had been at the beginning. The remaining ten were equally divided, five of them showing a higher and five a lower median age or graduation. Counting still by institutions, the median age

1880, "presented a list of eighty-one eminent men, all of them graduates of the early years of this [nineteenth] century or earlier, and none of them graduated at a more advanced age than eighteen." In 1886 he presented the results of a similar study, relating to 250 persons, none of whom graduated later than the middle of the nineteenth century. The youngest of these graduated at the age of nine; the oldest at thirty-one. Three were thirteen, three were fourteen, and eight were twenty-six at graduation. The largest number graduated at nineteen, the next largest at eighteen, and the average of the whole number was 19.87 (*Annual report of the President of Columbia College, 1885-86*, p. 32).

⁵ "Changes in the age of college graduation," by W. Scott Thomas, *The Popular Science Monthly*, June, 1903, pp. 159-171.

⁶ Cf., the following, written in 1842: "Young persons may be admitted to our colleges at the close of their fourteenth year, and many enter at that early age. The requirements of our colleges are, however, so moderate that a young man who has commenced life with other expectations may, at a much more advanced age, change his pursuits, and in a year or two be prepared for admission to college. Thus, a considerable proportion of every class have attained to twenty-five or thirty years of age. Thirty-two or three is not an uncommon age for a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Arts," Wayland, (*op. cit.*, p. 31).

of graduation in this whole group, in the first of the five decades under consideration, was twenty-two years, nine months, and six-tenths, while in the last decade of the five it was twenty-two years, seven months, and five-tenths, showing a lower age at the end of the period, by about two months, than at its beginning.

By changing the method of computation, it is shown that in the first of these decades the average age of graduation of all of the students included in the reckoning was twenty-three years and three months, while in the last decade it was twenty-three years and five-tenths of a month. Here again there appears a slight lowering of the age at which the baccalaureate was taken.

Mr. Thomas has attacked his problem by a third line of approach, which yields the most interesting results of all. He has computed the percentages of students graduated at the different years of their age, and plotted the resulting curves, comparing the first decade of this period with the last. From this it appears that the student body is becoming somewhat more homogeneous with regard to age; that a smaller percentage is found either below or above the age of the bulk of the class; and that the favorite age of graduation, the "mode," as he calls it, which was between twenty and twenty-one in the decade, 1850-59, has risen and is found between twenty-one and twenty-two in the decade, 1890-99. In this we see brought to pass one of the changes which President Wayland proposed.⁷

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, various influences combined to lend new emphasis to professional education. The great advance which had recently been made in the physical sciences had undoubtedly a great deal to do with the change. It is not surprising that schools of medicine should have been among the first institutions to respond to this

⁷ Earlier discussions of the same problem may be found in the following papers: Andrews, E. Benjamin, "Time and age in relation to the college curriculum," *EDUCATIONAL REVIEW*, vol. i. p. 133-146, February, 1891.

Table of ages of students entering freshman class of Brown University, by five-year periods, 1827-90: 1827-30, 17.7 years; 1831-75, over 18 and not over 19; 1876-90, from 19.0 to 19.4.

Age of students entering freshman class at Harvard: From 1856 to 1859, under

new quickening. When these schools undertook seriously to lengthen and strengthen their courses of instruction, they found the age of graduation from college already so high that to add a sufficient professional course to the ordinary course in liberal arts, would present serious practical difficulties. Then arose a demand for the shortening of the traditional college course, and this was followed by a demand for the shortening and enriching of the courses in lower schools. Harvard University was the storm-center in the earlier part of this discussion. I shall accordingly chronicle, as briefly as possible, the official history of Harvard's part in the movement down to the early nineties, and there this sketch will come to an end.

In his annual report for 1883-84, President Eliot started the discussion by suggesting, *a propos* of plans for lengthening the course of medical instruction to four years, the advisability of shortening the course in the college proper to three years, or of bringing undergraduates to avail themselves of the facilities already provided for abbreviating the college course.

The faculty of the medical school, in June, 1886, proposed to the Academic Council a plan for the abridgment of the college course, by those who would go from the college to the professional school of the university. The faculty of law concurred in this recommendation. After consideration in committee and extended discussion, the Academic Council, in November, 1887, requested the college faculty to consider the expediency of a reduction of the college course. The reply of the faculty was not given till March, 1890. It took the form of four recommendations, addressed to the Corporation:

"1. That the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of

18; from 1860 to 1880, over 18 and under 19; from 1881 to 1890, six years out of the ten, 19 or over.

Summary. "While the average age of graduation at New England colleges is rising, the usual age is falling."

Bartlett, S. C., "Shortening the college course." *Education*, vol. ii. p. 585-590. June, 1891.

Average age of entrance has not been materially rising at Williams, Michigan, Tufts, Dartmouth. At Dartmouth, average age of last four graduating classes was less than four months higher than that of classes in 1832-36. At Michigan University, average of present freshmen class is one year less than that of the classes fifteen years ago.

Arts be expressed . . . in terms of courses of study satisfactorily accomplished.

“ 2. That the number of courses required for the degree be sixteen.

“ 3. That when a student enters college there shall be placed to his credit . . . (1) any advanced studies on which he has passed in his admission examination beyond the number required for admission, and (2) any other college studies which he has anticipated.

“ 4. That a student may be recommended for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the middle as well as at the end of the academic year.”

This report was approved by the President and Fellows, who transmitted it to the Board of Overseers. From April, 1890, to April, 1891, the Overseers had the matter under consideration, and during the same twelvemonth public discussion of the shortening of the college course was at its height. Then action was taken by the Overseers, refusing consent to the first, second, and fourth proposals of the faculty, and approving the third, with unimportant modifications. In reporting this action, President Eliot called attention to the fact “that any student of fair parts can get the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Harvard College in three years under existing regulations without any unreasonable exertion.”

Parallel with this movement at Harvard, important steps were taken in other institutions. In May, 1890, Columbia University adopted the plan of permitting seniors to elect their studies, under certain restrictions, from courses offered by the faculties of philosophy, political science, mines, and laws. This arrangement came to be known as the “Columbia Plan,” by way of distinction from the proposed “Harvard Plan.” The University of Michigan had for several years prescribed its requirements for graduation in quantitative terms, and had permitted students who came up to the beginning of their senior year with not more than one half-year’s work of their course remaining uncompleted, to take professional studies during the senior year along with the remaining work of the undergraduate course. The further provision was now made at Michigan,

that students preparing for the (four-year) course in medicine might arrange for an overlapping of the two courses, with the result that the general and the professional degree might both be taken in seven years. The University of Chicago and the Leland Stanford Junior University appeared on the scene at this time, with their characteristic contributions to current discussion and practice. The proposals of President Butler respecting the baccalaureate, which have given a new impetus to the movement we are considering, are so recent that, with the discussions of this session, they belong rather to the present than to the province of the chronicler.

To sum up, the more significant aspects of this history seem to me to be these: That the bachelor's degree has in some sense determined our national educational standard; that it has come to be a general possession of our people, that is, the mark simply of the well-educated man, irrespective of his calling; that with better educational organization, it has come to represent normally a higher grade of training than it once stood for; that in becoming both a higher degree and a more popular degree, it has largely lost its old-time connection with training for vocation, and has prompted young people, after they have come of legal age, to go on still with general studies, and without serious thought of occupation in life. To ward off the danger of chronic dilettanteism, which is thus incurred; to integrate the baccalaureate with life, while keeping it still a degree of high standing and also a popular degree, has been, I think, the purpose of recent movements in this field. There has been some consideration, but not enough consideration as yet, of the problem of intermediate, connective courses, between general culture and professional training.

Of the extensive literature to which this question has given rise, attention may be called to the following, in addition to the papers already mentioned:

Adams, Charles Kendall, "The Next step in education," *The Forum*, v. 10, p. 618-632, February, 1891.

Comey, Arthur M., "The Growth of New England colleges," *EDUCATIONAL REVIEW*, v. 1, p. 209-210, March, 1891.

Gilman, Daniel C., "The Shortening of the college curriculum," *EDUCATIONAL REVIEW*, v. 1, p. 1-7, January, 1891.

Harris, George, "The Age of Graduation at Amherst College, 1830-1900," *EDUCATIONAL REVIEW*, v. 25, p. 525-7, May, 1903.

Shaler, N. S., "The Use and limits of academic culture," *Atlantic monthly*, v. 66, p. 160-170, August, 1890.

Annual report of the President of Columbia College: 1879-80 (Barnard), p. 44-56; 1885-86 (Barnard), p. 14-37; 1890-91 (Low), p. 48-52; 1901-02 (Butler), p. 29-49.

Annual report of the President of Cornell University (Adams), 1889-90, p. 20-22.

Report of the President of Harvard College (Eliot), 1883-84, p. 36-37; 1885-86, p. 14; 1886-87, p. 14, 16-17, 75, 76, 80; 1887-88, p. 12-13, 81-83; 1888-89, p. 21, 116-119; 1890-91, p. 7-9.

University of Michigan, The President's Report (Angell), for the year ending September 30, 1890, p. 14-18.

Report of the President of Yale University (Hadley), for the academic year 1901-1902, p. 13-29, 42-51.

ELMER ELLSWORTH BROWN

II

THE LENGTH OF THE COLLEGE COURSE¹

The period devoted to professional education has been more than doubled within the last forty years in the United States, except in the divinity schools, where three years were early required and are still required. In Judge Story's law school at Harvard the period of residence was eighteen months. It is now three years. In 1869-70 the period of required residence in the Harvard Medical School was four months in each of three years. It is now nine months in each of four years. This tendency to increase the period of professional instruction has by no means exhausted itself; and, inasmuch as the amount of professional knowledge and skill to be acquired by every student is steadily increasing, we must expect more and more time to be devoted to professional education. This tendency is by no means to be regretted. The advanced studies of professional schools supply a better training than the elementary studies of school and college; and they are generally pursued by the professional student with greater zeal and energy than either schoolboys or college students manifest; but, inasmuch as it is the interest of society and the interest of the individual that young men should be enabled to enter, well trained, on the practice of a profession by the time they are twenty-five years old, it follows that the period of training preliminary or preparatory to professional training should come to its end by the time the young men are twenty-one years old.

If we ask, next, at what age a boy who has had good opportunities may best leave his secondary school—whether a high school in a city, or a country academy, or an endowed or private school for the sons of well-to-do parents—the most reasonable

¹ A paper read before the Department of Higher Education of the National Educational Association at Boston, Mass., July 7, 1903.

answer is at the age of eighteen. At that age the average boy is ready for the liberty of a college or technical school, and will develop more rapidly in freedom than under the constant supervision of parents or schoolmasters. Seventeen is, for the average boy, rather young for college freedom, tho safe for steady boys of exceptional maturity. Between the secondary school and the professional school, then, there can be, as a rule, only three years for the college. The American colleges have been peculiar in expecting so long a residence as four years. For the B. A. degree Oxford and Cambridge have required residence during only three years, and during much less than one-half of each of those years. Even the honor men at Cambridge are in residence, as a rule, but three years. Until recent years the American colleges doubtless needed four years, because of the inadequacy of the secondary schools. These schools having steadily improved, and taken on themselves more and more of the preliminary training of well-educated youth, it is natural that the colleges should now be able to relinquish, without lowering their own standards, a portion of the time which they have heretofore claimed. What portion, is the interesting question. In the Latin countries the A. B. is given at the end of the secondary school course. In Germany the college course and the degree of A. B. have disappeared altogether.

On this point I confine myself to stating what answer the Harvard Faculty has given to this question about the relinquishment of a portion of the time heretofore devoted to the college. The principle on which the Harvard Faculty has acted is this: They propose, in reducing the time required for the A. B. degree to three years, to make no reduction whatever in the amount of work required for that degree. In other words, they propose that the degree of A. B., taken in three years, shall represent the same amount of attainment, or power required, which the A. B. taken in four years has heretofore represented. Under the conditions which obtain at Harvard, there is no difficulty whatever in bringing about this result. In the first place the Faculty has already pushed back into the secondary schools a good deal of work of proper school grade which used to be done in the

college. Secondly, the Faculty requires the young man who takes his degree in three years to pass exactly the same number of examinations on the same number of courses as are required of the man who takes the degree in four years. This demand can be readily met by the student, because the long summer vacations can be utilized, and the ordinary pace or rate of work of the student in the four-years' course can be considerably accelerated by the ambitious man who proposes to take his degree in three years. There are three months and two-thirds of vacation at Harvard in every academic year—a superfluous amount. The standard of work in the four-years' course for the Harvard A. B. was decidedly lower than the standard of work in any of the Harvard professional schools. It is one of the advantages of the three-year plan that it raises this standard of work during the college residence. Pursuing this general policy that the requirements for the A. B. are not to be diminished, the Harvard Faculty fixes the minimum regular residence for the Harvard A. B. at three years. They do not believe that the residence can be reduced to two years without diminishing the amount of work required for the degree.

At several different times it was proposed in the Harvard Faculty that they adopt the principle of counting the first year spent in one the professional schools towards the degree of A. B., as well as towards the degree of the professional school; but the Faculty always rejected that proposal, on the ground that this method implied a reduction of one-quarter in the requirements for the degree of A. B., and indeed of more than one-quarter, because the senior year ought to be a better year than the freshman year. To accentuate this determination not to abate the requirements for the degree of A. B., while shortening the period of residence, the Faculty for some years required persons who were to take the degree in three years to obtain higher marks or grades than were required of persons who took the degree in four years. This particular requirement has now been removed; but it was useful during the years of transition, because it made it evident that the three-years' man, on the average, had made greater attainments than the average four-years' man. The

governing boards of the university have had precisely the same intentions as the Faculty; so that insistence on the previous sum of the attainments for the degree is the characteristic feature of the evolution at Harvard. The result has been brought about by the use of the Harvard admission examinations to raise the standards of the secondary schools, by the utilization of parts of the long summer vacation, and by encouraging students to put more work into the day and into the year while they are in residence for the A. B.

The Harvard Faculty has endeavored to hold fast to the actual facts of the case. It says nothing about an A. B. in five years, because none but men in some way disabled spend five years in getting a bachelor's degree. It does not try to bring boys to college in large number at sixteen or seventeen years of age; but it has for years advised that they come at eighteen instead of nineteen. It offers the bachelor's degree in three years or three and a half years, instead of four years, because many students can win the degree in these shorter periods of residence without any lowering of the standard. In short, it proposes to hold everything it has won for the college and the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and to meet the claims of professional education by better organization of the whole course of education from beginning to end, by better methods of teaching, and by large and early freedom of choice among different studies.

While this change was going on in Harvard College, the university took the important step of requiring the A. B. for admission to its three oldest professional schools, first in the Divinity School, then in the Law School, and lastly in the Medical School. It had already established the Graduate School in Arts and Sciences, for admission to which a preliminary degree was, of course, required. It is unnecessary to point out that this action gives the strongest possible support to the A. B. If taken by the leading universities of the country at large, it would settle at once in the affirmative the question of the continued existence of the American college. To preserve the college, the sure way is to keep down the age for leaving the secondary school, abbreviate the college course to three years, and require

the A. B. for admission to university professional schools. Then we may avoid what has happened in all the nations of Continental Europe, namely, the disappearance of the college course for the A. B.

✂ The requirement of the degree of Bachelor of Arts for admission to the professional schools has the happiest effect on the whole course of professional study. The classes in the professional schools become at once more homogeneous in quality, and that quality is distinctly higher than before. To believe that any other result were possible would be to discredit the college course itself.

The objections to this very decided improvement are two. It is alleged in the first place, that the professional schools of the universities cannot bear the reduction in their number of students which would follow the enforcement of this requirement. Doubtless there would be some temporary diminution in the number of students; but the experience at Harvard shows that this reduction would be only temporary. The reduction is lessened, if four or five years' notice of the change is given. After a few years, the reduction would be overcome. Indeed, in the Harvard Law School, the number of students rapidly increased after the requirement of a degree for admission to the school. As a rule, the men already engaged in the practice of a profession approve and actively support all measures which tend to raise the standard of education for their profession. This pecuniary argument, therefore, may safely be regarded as one of only temporary and limited force. The other objection is a sentimental one. It is said that the requirement of a degree for admission to all professional schools would exclude some young men of remarkable powers, who have had no opportunities in their earlier years to obtain a good, systematic education. The obvious answer to this objection is that the organized institutions of education are not planned for geniuses, and that geniuses do not need them. Moreover, it is not supposed that all the professional schools of the country would make this requirement. There would doubtless be plenty of private-venture schools in the large cities, which would receive young men of an appropriate age without the slightest inquiry into

their preliminary education. That is the case to-day, and the proposed change in university policy would, of course, be an advantage to such schools. The question before us, in this Department of Higher Education, is what the universities ought to do. I urge that the universities should maintain each its present standard for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, but should permit young men who are capable of reaching that standard in three years of residence to take the degree in three years; and, secondly, that, with notice of not less than four years, they should require some bachelor's degree in arts or sciences for admission to their professional schools. The long notice will enable parents, schools, and the whole community to adapt themselves to the change. The greater the number of universities which unite in this movement, the more easily will it be brought about.

It will be observed, perhaps, that I have said nothing about the degree of Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Philosophy. My reason is that I regard those degrees as only temporary and inferior substitutes for the traditional degree of Bachelor of Arts. I believe that these lesser degrees will disappear as soon as an adequate variety of studies is allowed to count towards the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Towards this admirable consummation the Harvard Faculty has already taken some important steps. Thus, many college studies can be counted toward the degree of Bachelor of Science; and many of the studies originally introduced into the university thru the Scientific School may be counted towards the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Again, in 1903 and thereafter, the requirements for admission to the Scientific School represent as large an amount of work done at the secondary school as the requirements for admission to Harvard College, altho the number of options is larger in the Scientific School requirements. A very moderate increase in the number of required studies for admission to the Scientific School, and in the number of optional studies allowed for admission to Harvard College, would make the requirements for admission to the two departments identical. For a time, in the development of the American universities, there was a strong tendency to mul-

tively bachelor degrees. For ten years past the tendency has been all the other way. Until this simplification is brought about, however, the requirement for admission to the university professional schools will have to be a bachelor's degree in arts or sciences, this description including the miscellaneous degrees in letters, philosophy, engineering, etc.

Finally, if a degree in arts or sciences is to be required for admission to university professional schools, the road to such a degree should be as smooth and broad as possible. No exclusive prescriptions should obstruct it; and the various needs of the individual pupil should be carefully provided for in both school and college.

CHARLES W. ELIOT

f HARVARD UNIVERSITY

III

THE LENGTH OF THE COLLEGE COURSE.¹

The American college is the vital center of our system of higher education. With all its imperfections, it serves, as probably no other institution can serve, to uphold the standards of the secondary schools and to lift from below the level of professional schools. It occupies an intermediate field of its own, not perfectly defined, but as clearly defined as the fields of our secondary and professional education. It should be allowed and encouraged, as they are, to organize itself completely and efficiently according to the laws of its own life, without curtailment or encroachment. Otherwise we shall be in the absurd and uncivilized position of refusing to try for the best college education, and shall be sacrificing to commercial and utilitarian demands the one educational agency most needed to purify and elevate the too materialistic tone of our American life.

By tradition, the length of the college course is four years. This is almost universal. There seems to be no good reason *a priori* why it should have been four, rather than five or three, or even two. But the practical unanimity of the tradition indicates that thus far at least the period of four years has been found to be well suited to our needs. Analyze this as we may, it is a definite result of long and wide experience, and one which should not be discarded without the fullest consideration.

It is argued, however, that conditions are changing, and that a shorter time must be allotted, if we would save the American college. This argument rests mainly on the increasing age of the student at entrance to college and the lengthening courses of the professional schools. The fact that college

¹ A paper read before the Department of Higher Education of the National Educational Association at Boston, Mass., July 7, 1903.

graduates are kept back from entering business life until they are twenty-two need not disturb us on economic grounds, because it is also a fact that the marked increase of college graduates in business life has coincided with the very period in which the age of graduation has been rising. But for those going into professional life the case is different. Taking eighteen as the average age of entrance to college, adding four years of college and three or, as it may soon be, four years of professional study, the young doctor or lawyer is not fledged until he is twenty-six. A year, or even two years, may be saved by reducing the length of the college course.

Let us admit, at once, that we are facing a serious economic question. The saving of a year or two in time and money will in many cases settle the question as to how extended an education a young man can get. Young men who must get to law or medicine by twenty-four must forego something, if they enter college at eighteen. No device will secure them eight years of educated life in six. The brighter and more mature among them may perhaps save a year by entering college at seventeen. But this does not meet the general difficulty. If by any chance they enter at sixteen, they will be found as a rule too immature mentally for the studies and too immature morally for the life of our large modern colleges. This solution may, therefore, be dismissed as insufficient and unwise. If the year or two years is to be saved, it must be taken in most instances from college, or from the professional school.

We may as well admit that in such cases the college must suffer the loss, because the intending doctor or lawyer cannot escape the demands of the professional schools. His livelihood is conditioned on completing his professional education, and this settles the matter.

But does it settle the general question of the proper length of the college course for those who have time to take it? What are we to do with the mass of students who can take four years of college? Why must their course be shortened? It is a minority which goes on to law and medicine. Some better reason must be found than the fact that a part of this minority cannot remain four years. If it were true, or if it becomes

true, that majority of young men suitable for college cannot stay thruout the present course, then it may be a shorter course must be established. Otherwise it does not appear that we are doing a wrong to students by holding them four years, unless it can also be shown that a three-year or a two-year course is intrinsically better than a four-year course for American young men.

This is to me the one question of real difficulty. I am unable to see that young men generally will be better trained to begin as lawyers at twenty-four than at twenty-five or twenty-six. I am able to see that many cannot afford to wait so long, and must take what they can get in the shorter time. It is clear that some of them cannot take four years in college. It is also clear that giving them the bachelor's degree at the end of two years or three years will not give them an education of four years. It is the time taken, as well as the studies taken, that counts heavily, if a permanent impression is to be made. Extended time in residence given to unhurried settled study, and not rapidly formed acquaintance with a series of studies, is what is needed. And when we realize with what imperfect training so many boys come from the schools, it may easily take four years to outflank their deficiencies, correct their methods, and develop even a semblance of liberal culture.

✦ Why, then, if some of them must leave college, should they not leave, as some now do, at the end of two years or three years, taking with them their valuable half-loaf or three-quarters loaf of college life and training? It is worth a great deal to them. They will find most of the professional schools ready to receive them, and some of them ready to give, if not the very best, at least a good professional education. The best of everything in education cannot be had without taking the best time needed. In fact we are exaggerating the situation, for if all professional schools would merely go so far as to exact at least two years of college as prerequisite to entrance, there would be a gain the country over in the quality of professional students. It may perhaps be thought that the three-year course will bring more students to college and more college graduates to professional schools. This is a matter of

speculation. But suppose it does. Is it clear that we need more college students with shorter education than they have now? Is it clear that we need proportionally more doctors and lawyers? The desired gain in quality of professional students can be secured without destroying the four-year course, merely by exacting generally three years of college as a minimum entrance requirement. Has any American university gone farther than this in dealing with the students of its own college who enter its own law or medical school?

In the present condition of affairs in our land, viewed in its entirety, the question of entrance to professional schools and the question of the proper length of the college course are two distinct questions. By all means let there be a few leaders among the professional schools exacting a college degree for admission, especially if it be possible to secure this on the basis of a full college course, completed in full time without haste or crowding. The time may perhaps come when all good schools will be able to follow their example. But it has not come yet.

If, therefore, the college course is to be shortened, it should be because the shorter course is intrinsically better for the mass of college students. Is four years of American college education better than three? Few will doubt it is better than two. Three years or four is the real question.

That a change of profound importance has come over our colleges in the last thirty years none will deny. It is a change in tone and spirit. The gains in diversified opportunity and in student self-government have been immense. There have also been losses. In the large older colleges particularly there has been an accession of students who are attracted more by the social and athletic life than by studies. There has been a relaxing of effort, a disposition to look on college life as a pleasant social episode. The old-fashioned college, with its simple program of prescribed studies, is gone. The so-called "elective system" has come in to replace it, wholly or partly. To rehabilitate the old state of things is impossible and undesirable. To endure the disintegration and confusion in intellectual standards which has ensued is also undesirable and, I believe,

impossible. The strength of opinion favorable to the four-year course is found to be greatest where a large basis of prescribed studies has been kept. The arguments for a shorter course are most influential where elective freedom prevails most. It is possible to argue with much effect for four years when it can be shown that a fine education is given because of the very definite correlation of studies to one end, namely, the acquainting of young men not only with the methods of knowledge, but with the substance of things important for all liberally educated men to know, the elemental things which, taken together, represent the stock and staple of our intellectual inheritance as a race. This takes considerable time. Supplement this with a first exploration into the fields, or, far better, into some definitely mapped field of elective freedom corresponding to the well-ascertained aptitudes rather than the chance likings of the student, and four years will be found none too much. A natural break between the two lower and two upper years may thus easily be made. At this time, if the hard necessity arises so soon, let men leave who must leave early. The bachelor's degree may then be kept for those who do the full work in the normal time. From this point of view, the four-year course is in every way worth maintaining.

But if the principle is to prevail that, once in college, the student is to find all studies elective, the case is very different. No definite program is completed for the mass of students, so far as concerns the specific substance of what they study. And without this an important common element is subtracted. A certain effect is lost. The common area of liberal culture, in which all educated men should be at home, tends to shrink and vanish. The solidarity of the student community, the intense *esprit de corps* which accompanies movement by college classes, the intimacy of the community in things of common intellectual acquaintance—all these are weakened by dispersion. The students are not traveling near enough in the same direction to be within easy hail and call. Such a condition is anomalous in education. Secondary education below gains its effect from the correlation of prescribed studies, so as to form a general gymnastic of the mind. Professional education

above is unattainable without the mastery of correlated subjects prescribed for all. The inner relations of the subjects studied, and not the preferences of immature minds, form the basis for an organized course of study, and should have much to do, perhaps most to do, with determining the length of any course. College education alone, under the plan of free election, is being allowed to wander aimlessly, as tho there were no general and necessary rational relations according to which college studies should be combined as they are in other fields of education. The student's preference, so often determined by inadequate knowledge or an easy-going following of the line of least resistance, is dignified by the name of "election" and the bewildering mass of elective studies offered him is seriously called a "system." "System" it may be to others, but not to him.

How can a definite argument for a discipline and culture of four years, rather than of three years, be erected on such a basis? We need not waste time in exploring the tangle of inner reasons which indicate that the indefiniteness and heterogeneity of a free elective course may be a proper, even an urgent reason for shortening it. The mere fact that the movement for a three-year course is strongest where elective freedom is least restricted is enough indication that a powerful cause operating inside the college course to shorten it is the inability of a purely elective scheme to fill out four years with profit to the mass of students.

If the proposal were made to change a four-year course in elective studies to a three-year course with a large basis of prescribed studies, I confess the three-year course would seem to me a marked improvement. And unless something is done to reduce the tangle to order, the three-year course seems to be inevitable in some places. But if the proposal be to reduce the other type of four-year course to three years, then the loss is not only unnecessary, but is in every way undesirable, because it is the loss of the crowning year in a definitely rounded plan, the consummate college year of intellectual development, privilege, and satisfaction.

On the colleges, therefore, which believe in maintaining a large basis of prescribed studies as the one sure foundation for

a rational plan of subsequent elective studies will rest the duty of maintaining a four-year course. They will need to make sure that they work out their program in true accordance with their academic confession of faith and secure to their students at all hazards the few fundamental studies, well and amply taught. They will need to be resolute in teaching young men that there is no real education without well-directed effort, that it is not doing what a man likes or dislikes to do, but the constant exercise in doing what he ought to do in matters of intellect as well as of conduct, whether he happens to like it or not, that turns the frank, careless, immature, lovable schoolboy into the strong, well-trained man, capable of directing wisely himself and others. If they fail to do this with measurable success, they fail to justify their contention. If they succeed, the American college course of traditional length and largely prescribed content may be trusted to justify itself triumphantly.

ANDREW F. WEST

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IV

THE LENGTH OF THE COLLEGE COURSE ¹

In view of the time allotted, I limit my statement to the presentation of some considerations which appear to me to be distinctly opposed to the proposition to make three years the normal period of residence for the college course instead of four.

Some students are, unquestionably, able to complete the course in three years. About the same number should perhaps, to do the work equally well, take five years. The question before us, however, is not one that relates to a small proportion of the students who enter college—the very brightest or the very dullest. It is a question which has to do with the normal college course, that is, the course of study intended for the average student.

It is easy to point out the origin of the difficulty which confronts us and has given rise to the proposition itself. It is a survival of the old idea which made the college curriculum something rigid, something into conformity with which every student must be brought, rather than something which should be made to conform to each individual student. It is not inconsistent with this suggestion that the first discussion of the question took place in an atmosphere friendly to the elective policy, in distinction from the policy of a fixed curriculum. Adaptation to the needs of the individual along certain lines did not in this case carry with it flexibility and adaptation in other lines. It is not an adaptation of the college course to the needs of individual men to propose that the course shall be a three-year one. An adaptation would permit four years for those who need four years, five years for those who need five years, and three years for those who are able to do the work in three years.

¹ A paper read before the Department of Higher Education of the National Educational Association at Boston, Mass., July 7, 1903.

1. The proposition for a three-year course is based upon the supposition that the entire work of the college course is really university work. This is a mistaken supposition. The work of the freshman and sophomore years is ordinarily of the same scope and character as that of the preceding years in the academy or high school. To cut off a full year means either the crowding of this higher preparatory or college work of the freshman and sophomore years, or the shortening of the real university work done in the junior and senior years of the college course. The adoption of either of these alternatives will occasion a serious loss to the student. The average man is not prepared to take up university work until he has reached the end of the sophomore year. No greater mistake is being made in the field of higher education than the confusion which is coming to exist between college and university methods of work. The adoption of a three-year college term will only add to a confusion already great.

2. The suggestion rests upon an incorrect idea as to the age of students beginning work. The average age of students entering college to-day is about the same as it was twenty-five and fifty years ago. The average age of students leaving college to-day is about the same as it was twenty-five or fifty years ago. The serious difficulty lies in the fact that the demands of professional education are greater to-day than they were twenty-five or fifty years ago, and that, instead of courses of professional study extending over two years, we are confronted with courses of professional study extending over three or four years. It is a point of special interest, however, that, altho the requirements for entrance to college are so much greater than they were in former years, the student masters these requirements and enters at practically the same age. In other words, better educational facilities have made it possible to graduate the young man at the same age, but with nearly two years of additional work. With all this gain it is apparent to any student of the situation that even yet there is great waste, and that a better arrangement of the curriculum in the earlier stages of educational work will make it possible for one or two additional years to be gained. With the multiplication of high

schools and their greater efficiency, and with the consequent improvement in the grammar schools, much may be expected. It is reasonable to suppose that a practical limit has been reached, so far as concerns the requirements for admission to college. With this limit fixed, it is not unreasonable to expect that on the basis of the present requirements a boy may reach college one or two years earlier within the next decade. This will counterbalance the increase of time required in the professional schools referred to above. It is, therefore, unnecessary to shorten the college course merely to provide for an extension of the professional course.

3. The proposition is based upon a wrong idea of the high school. This institution is no longer a school preparatory for college. In its most fully developed form it covers at least one-half the ground of the college of fifty years ago. It is a real college; at all events, it provides the earlier part of a college course. Its work may not be separated from that of the freshman and sophomore years either in method or scope. Many high schools are actually moving forward to include in their curriculum the work of the freshman and sophomore years. In these schools the entire college course, as it was known fifty years ago, besides the additional work in science which at that time was unknown, is included. This development of the high school has a significant bearing upon the question before us. How is this new college, the product of our own generation, to be brought into relationship with the old college which has come down to us from our ancestors? The correct appreciation of the modern high school and its proper adjustment to the situation as a whole make strongly against the proposed three-year course.

4. The adoption of the three-year policy by the larger institutions would be followed immediately by an increase of requirements for admission to the first year of college work. This fact is seen in the history of the college of the Johns Hopkins University. While high schools as such show a tendency to increase the scope of their work, and while this tendency is certainly to be encouraged, such increase should be accepted as a substitute for the work of the college, but not as an addi-

tional requirement for admission to the college. Our present difficulties have their origin partly in the fact that from time to time we have increased the requirements for admission to college until, as has already been pointed out, a fairly good college course of instruction is now obtained before the so-called college work begins. This is an evil which should be corrected, and its correction lies in the direction of reducing the requirements for admission rather than in increasing them. The evil would be intensified by the adoption of the three-year policy.

5. The proposition is based upon the supposition that the time requirement is the essential thing. Starting from the tradition that the college course must be four years for all men of whatever grade, it proceeds upon the assumption that, for various reasons, this period, now the same for all students, must continue to be the same for all students, namely, the three-year period. No idea has exerted a more injurious influence in the history of college work than that the period of four years, however employed, if spent in college residence, guaranteed a college education. It is questionable whether the time limit in the undergraduate course is any more important a factor than the time limit in the work for the doctor's degree. This fondness for a time limit, which is the fundamental basis of the three-year proposition, is a survival of the old class system which disappeared long ago in the larger institutions, and is beginning to show decadence even in the smaller institutions.

6. The proposition is likewise to be opposed because of its deleterious influence upon the smaller colleges. The American college is the glory of American spiritual life, and its existence must not be endangered. Granting that the larger institutions could adopt without injury the three-year plan, it would be impossible for the smaller colleges so to do. Two things would follow: (a) the decadence of the better colleges of this class, and (b) the adoption of the policy by colleges only slightly above the grade of high schools. When it comes to be seen that the college system is adjusted in its entirety with a view to its relationship to the professional schools, and that it is

only a second college course following a first college course already received in the high school, the tendency will be to go directly from the high school to the university—a tendency to be discouraged as urgently as possible. Moreover, the colleges of lower grade will at once reduce their period to one of three years, even tho their curriculum be greatly inferior to that of the larger institution. In other words, the step proposed, in spite of protestations to the contrary, means, in the end, a lowering of requirements thruout the field of higher education.

7. Less than four years for a boy who enters college at the right age, sixteen or seventeen, is too short a time. The adoption, however, of the three-year course will compel every boy to limit his college course to three years. This is a serious difficulty. On the present basis he may take one, two, three, or four years according to circumstances. On the new plan he would be limited to three years, so far as collge work is concerned. With the immense increase in attendance at college which has come within the last decade on the four-year basis, why should we deliberately plan to reduce the time to three years? Surely a preparation will be needed in the years to come as full and long as in the years that are passed. The one place in which it is unnecessary and undesirable to cut down the time of those who are willing and able to take four years is in the college period. Let the time be shortened in the earlier years, but at this stage of preparation, with the great number of subjects which may profitably be considered, let us have all the time possible.

8. The suggestion of the third-year course ignores the culture value of the subjects in the first year of professional work. For my own part I cannot conceive any work more valuable to a young man or woman, from the point of view of citizenship and general culture, than the first year's work in the curriculum of the law school, the medical school, the divinity school, or the school of education. In any one of these groups the student is brought into contact with living questions. The fact that the method of professional schools is different is, in the majority of cases, a distinct advantage, and in no case an injury, since it serves as a corrective of a tendency toward dilet-

tanteism unquestionably encouraged by the more lax methods of the later years of college work. If any one question has been settled in the educational discussion of the last quarter of a century, it is that a line is no longer to be drawn between this class of subjects and that, on the ground that one group, and not the other, may be regarded as culture-producing. The opportunity to elect subjects of this character in the last year of the college course does not injure the integrity of the college. It must be confessed that the adoption of this policy by larger institutions introduces a difficulty for the smaller institutions, but this difficulty is not insuperable, and several ways have been already suggested for meeting it.

9. The proposition, as already hinted, subordinates the college almost wholly to the professional school. It is largely because of the increased demands of the professional schools that it seems necessary to shorten the college course. This does not seem to be in harmony with the fact that a comparatively small number of students really expect to enter professional schools. Why should students who do not have the professional school in mind be required to shorten the term of college residence? If it is answered that the student who enters any line of business activity needs the year thus saved in order that he may begin his work earlier, it may be said that the facts do not bear out this proposition; and, in any case, a year of business is not to be treated as a year of college work in the sense that it is equivalent to the first year's course of study in a professional school. It is therefore as inexpedient to adjust the whole college policy to the supposed needs of a minority who are planning to enter the professional school as it is to adjust the whole policy of a high school to the needs of a minority who enter college.

10. In conclusion it is to be urged in opposition to the proposed movement that it is in general contrary to the drift of educational movements, and that the very thing which it proposes can easily be scured by other means. Among other educational tendencies to-day may be cited (a) that of the high school to enlarge its scope and add to its curriculum one or two years of additional work: (b)

that of strengthening of the facilities and curriculum of the average smaller college; (c) that of avoiding the waste in the earlier years, and the consequent possibility of college entrance at an earlier age; (d) that of distinct separation between college and university methods. To each and all of these the proposition stands opposed.

Following the example of one of the speakers this morning, I would suggest that the plan which has been in operation at the University of Chicago for nearly ten years has seemed to many of us to meet in large measure the demands called for this morning. This plan provides a course of four years and a course of two years. It permits students of exceptional ability to do the work in three years. It makes it possible for those who so desire to prolong the work to five years. It is adapted to the needs of individuals of different classes. With the completion of the two-year course a certificate is given, granting the title of Associate in the University. This, for the present, is sufficient in the way of a degree. To students who maintain a standing of the highest grade certain concessions are made.

The details of the plan have been worked out as experience has indicated the need. The provision of a two-year course meets the need of many who cannot take a longer term of residence and likewise of many who ought not to take a longer course. The provision of a normal four-year course meets the need of the average man or woman. This plan does not imply that this average man or woman who spends four years in residence is particularly stupid, or that a year has been wasted.

It is believed, from an experience of ten or more years, that it contains the solution of at least many of the points now under discussion.

WILLIAM R. HARPER

V

THE LENGTH OF THE COLLEGE COURSE ¹

In my judgment most participants in the discussion now going on thruout the land as to the length of the baccalureate course and the preparation for the professional schools, err in supposing that the two questions are necessarily reducible to one and also in taking hold of that one by the wrong end. The nature, content, and proper length of the baccalaureate course are matters quite independent of the proper standards of professional education and are entitled to consideration on their own merits.

The one question to which the two are usually reduced is taken hold by the wrong end when it is said that the baccalaureate course should be of a stated length, say four years or three years, and that everything else in education and in life must adapt itself accordingly. Those who take this stand give us no clear notion of (1) where the baccalauerate course begins, (2) what it consists of, or (3) what it exists for. They assume that all of these points are clearly understood and generally agreed upon. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Not even the so-called reputable colleges are in anything approaching agreement as to the standard to be enforced for admission to the baccalaureate course; and while there is an external pretense of unanimity as to what the baccalaureate course exists for, that course is, nevertheless, in too many instances, fearfully and wonderfully made. Dr. Wayland said over sixty years ago that "there is nothing magical or imperative in the term of four years, nor has it any natural relation to a course of study. It was adopted as a matter of accident, and can have, by itself, no important bearing on the subject in hand." To suppose that a four-year baccalaureate

¹ A paper read before the Department of Higher Education of the National Educational Association, at Boston, Mass., July 7, 1903.

course is necessary *semper, ubique, ab omnibus*, is to elevate an accident to the plane of a principle.

Others take hold of the question by the middle. They fix an arbitrary age at which professionally trained men should be ready for active work in life, and after subtracting the sum of the years that they propose to allot to the elementary school, the secondary school, and the professional school, the remaining years, three, or perhaps two, are held to be sufficient for the college.

Both of these methods appear to me to be arbitrary and unscientific, altho the former is the usual academic mode of settling the question and has behind it the support of uncritical public opinion.

One of the worst of all educational evils is that of quantitative standards, and it persists surprisingly in the discussion of college and university problems. Every higher course of study that I know of, except only that of graduate work leading to the degree of doctor of philosophy at the best universities, is primarily quantitative. These courses are all based on time spent, not upon performance. The adjustment of the period of work to the capacity of individual students, now so common in elementary schools and not unusual in secondary schools, is almost wholly absent from the colleges. The "lock-step" is seen there to perfection, and class after class of one hundred or even two hundred members moves forward (with the exception of a few delinquents) as if all its members were cast in a common mold. The place of the baccalaureate course and its standards will never be established on sound principles until the question of its length is made subordinate to those relating to its content and its purpose. Moreover, it is quite unreasonable to assume that the baccalaureate course should be of one and the same length for everybody. By the term "baccalaureate course" I mean those liberal studies in the arts and sciences that follow the secondary school period.

My own views on the questions at issue are, briefly, these:

1. The baccalaureate or college course of study of the liberal arts and sciences should be preserved at all hazards as an essential part of our educational organization. It is distinctly

American and a very powerful factor in the upbuilding of the nation's culture and idealism. It should be treated as a thing of value in and for itself, and not merely as an incident to graduate study or to professional schools.

2. The college course is in serious danger by reason of the fact that the secondary school is reaching up into its domain on the one hand and the professional school is reaching down into it on the other. Purely professional subjects in law, medicine, engineering, and architecture are widely accepted as part of the baccalaureate or college course by university colleges, and now independent colleges in different parts of the country are trying various devices with a view to doing the same thing. If this tendency continues unchecked, at many institutions there will soon be little left of the old baccalaureate course but the name.

3. To preserve the college it is necessary (a) to fix and enforce a standard of admission which can be met normally by a combined elementary and secondary school course of not more than ten years well spent, and (b) to keep out of the baccalaureate course purely professional subjects pursued for professional ends by professional methods. The college course, in other words, should be constructed for itself alone and for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual needs of the youth of our time, without reference or regard to specific careers. This course must be widely elective, and so offer material to enrich and develop minds of every type. This course is the best preparation for the professional study of law, medicine, divinity, engineering architecture, and teaching, simply because it does what it does for the human mind and the human character, and not because it is so hampered and beaten as to serve as a conduit to a particular career or careers.

4. This course should be entered upon at seventeen, or in some cases at sixteen. Eighteen is too late for the normal boy; the boy who has had every educational advantage and is not ready to meet any existing college entrance test before he is eighteen has been dawdling and weakening his mental powers by keeping them too long in contact with merely elementary studies.

5. For the boy who enters college at seventeen and who looks forward to a career as scholar, as teacher, or as man of affairs, four years is, ordinarily, not too long a time to spend in liberal studies. On the other hand the boy who, entering college at seventeen, proposes to take up later the study of a profession in a university, ought not to be compelled to spend four years upon liberal studies just at that time in his life. To compel him to do so is to advance the standard of professional education arbitrarily without in any way raising it. It is a fallacy to suppose that the more time a boy spends in study the more he knows and the more he grows. Whether he grows by study depends entirely upon whether he is studying subjects adapted to his needs, his interests, and his powers. Pedagogues suppose that the more time a boy spends in school and college, the better; educators know the contrary. There is a time to leave off as well as a time to begin. A boy *can* develop intellectual apathy in college as well as knowledge, weakness of will as well as strength of character.

6. The earlier parts of professional courses in law, medicine, engineering and the like are most excellent material for the boy of nineteen or twenty. He should begin them at that time and complete his four years of professional study by twenty-three or twenty-four. To postpone his professional course later than this is not only to waste his time, but to waste his mind, which is far worse.

7. There should be a college course two years in length, carefully constructed as a thing by itself and not merely the first part of a three-years' or a four-years' course, which will enable intending professional students to spend this time as advantageously as possible in purely liberal studies. The university colleges can establish such a course readily enough; the independent colleges will have to establish such a course or see their influence and prestige steadily decline. To try to meet the new situation by simply reproducing all present conditions on a three-year scale instead of on a four-year scale, is a case of *solvitur ambulando*. The shortening of the college to three years for all students involves an unnecessary sacrifice. As usually defended this policy involves no educational principle,

but merely concedes a year of liberal study to the modern demand for haste and hurry.

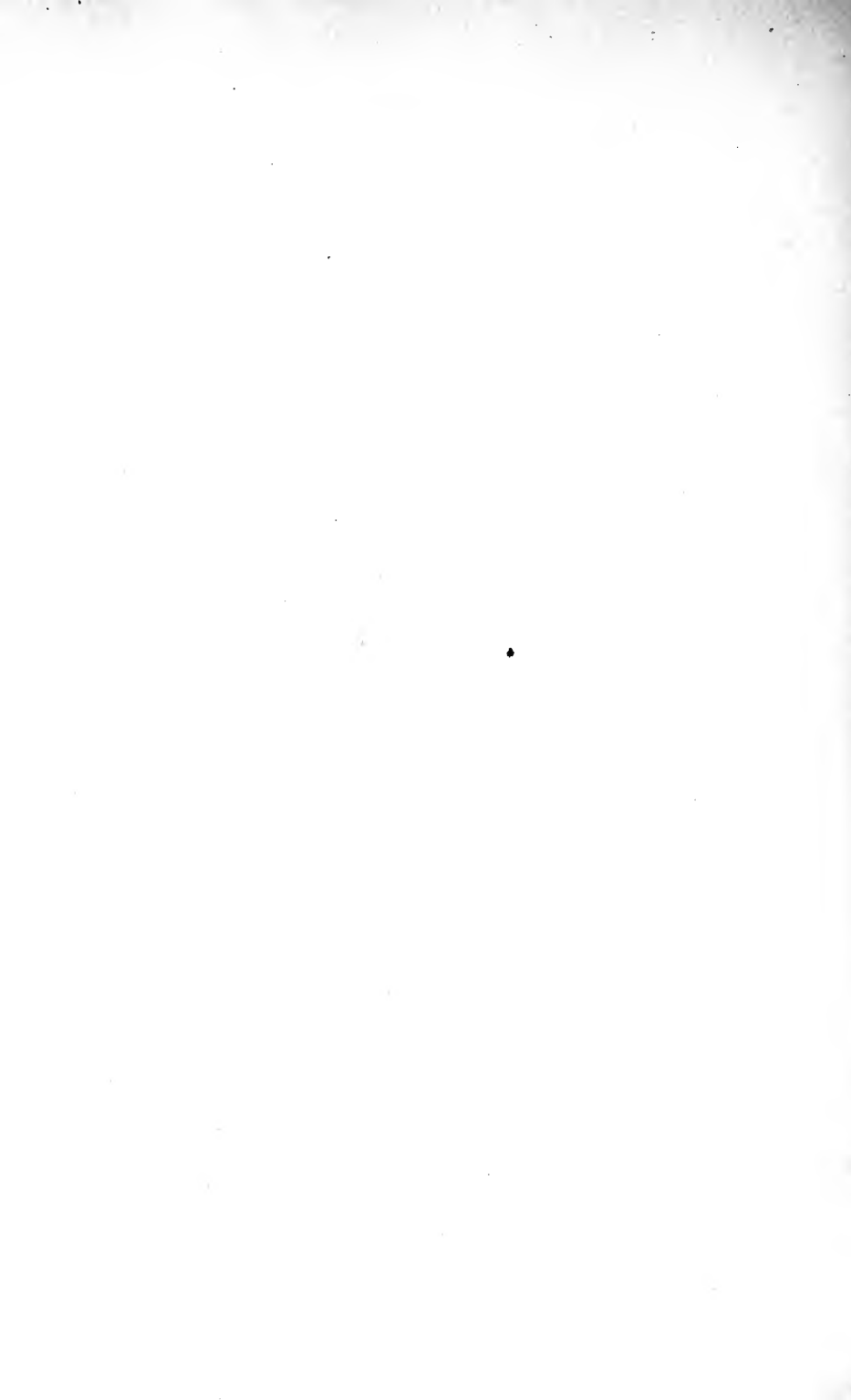
8. Whether the completion of such a two-year course should be crowned with a degree is to me a matter of indifference. Degrees are the tinsel of higher education and not its reality. Such a two-year course as I have in mind would imply a standard of attainment at least as high as that required for the degree of A. B. in 1860, which had many characteristics that we of to-day persistently undervalue. If this discussion could be diverted from degrees to real educational standards, it would be a great gain. The compromise plan as to degrees, now becoming so popular, whereby the baccalaureate degree is given either for two years of college study and two years of work in a professional school or for three years of college study and one year of work in a professional school, is disastrous to the integrity of the college course. It deliberately shortens the college course by one year or two while proclaiming a four-year college course. It is a policy that only university colleges can adopt; independent colleges must suffer if it becomes a fixed and permanent policy.

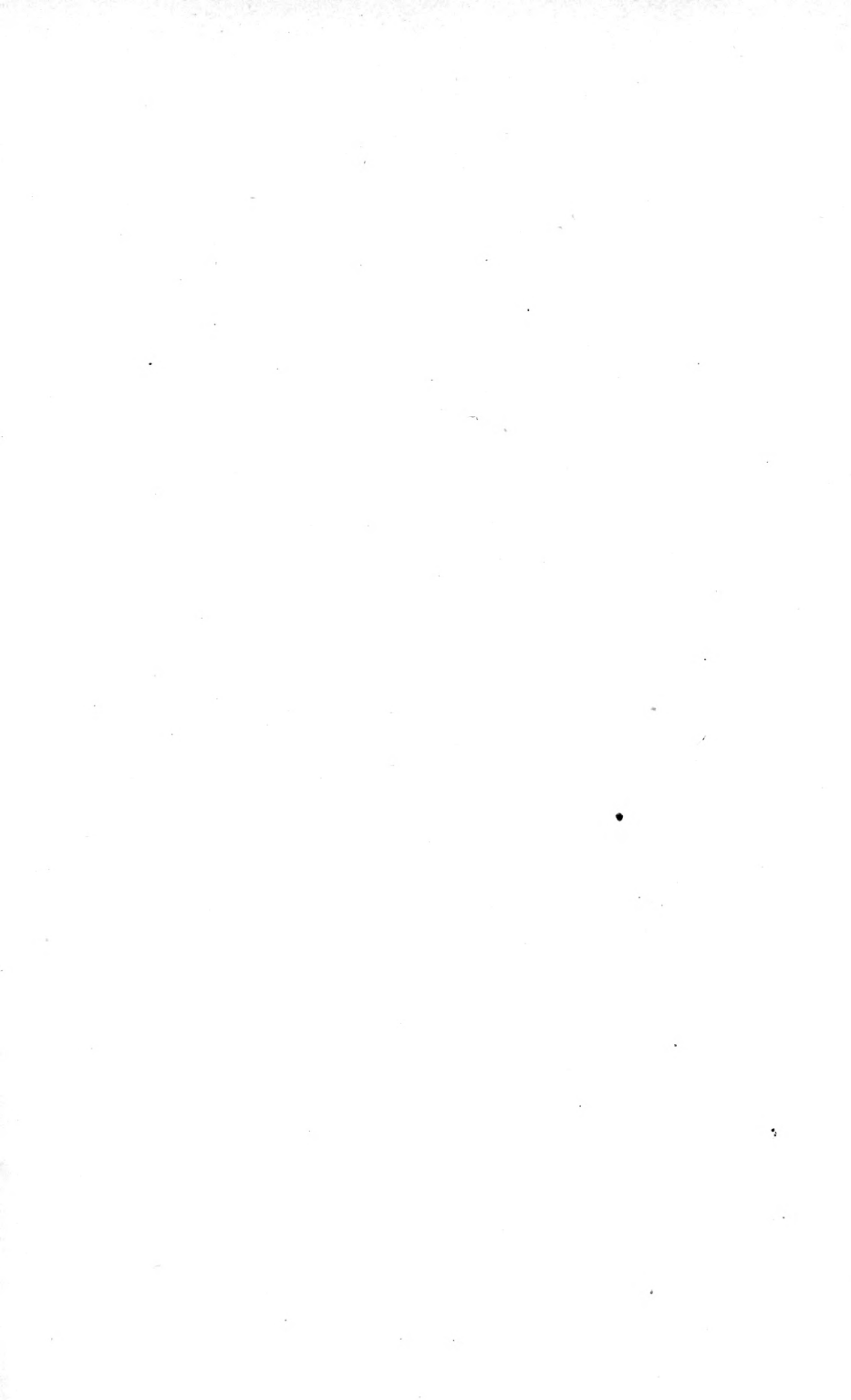
9. The most difficult point to establish, apparently, is that at which the baccalaureate course should begin. Colleges with courses nominally four years in length are admitting students with from one to two years' less preparation than is demanded by other colleges with four-year courses. The lax enforcement of published requirements for admission, together with the wide acceptance of certificates from uninspected and unvisited schools, has demoralized college standards very generally. It does not make much difference how long the baccalaureate course is, if it does not begin anywhere.

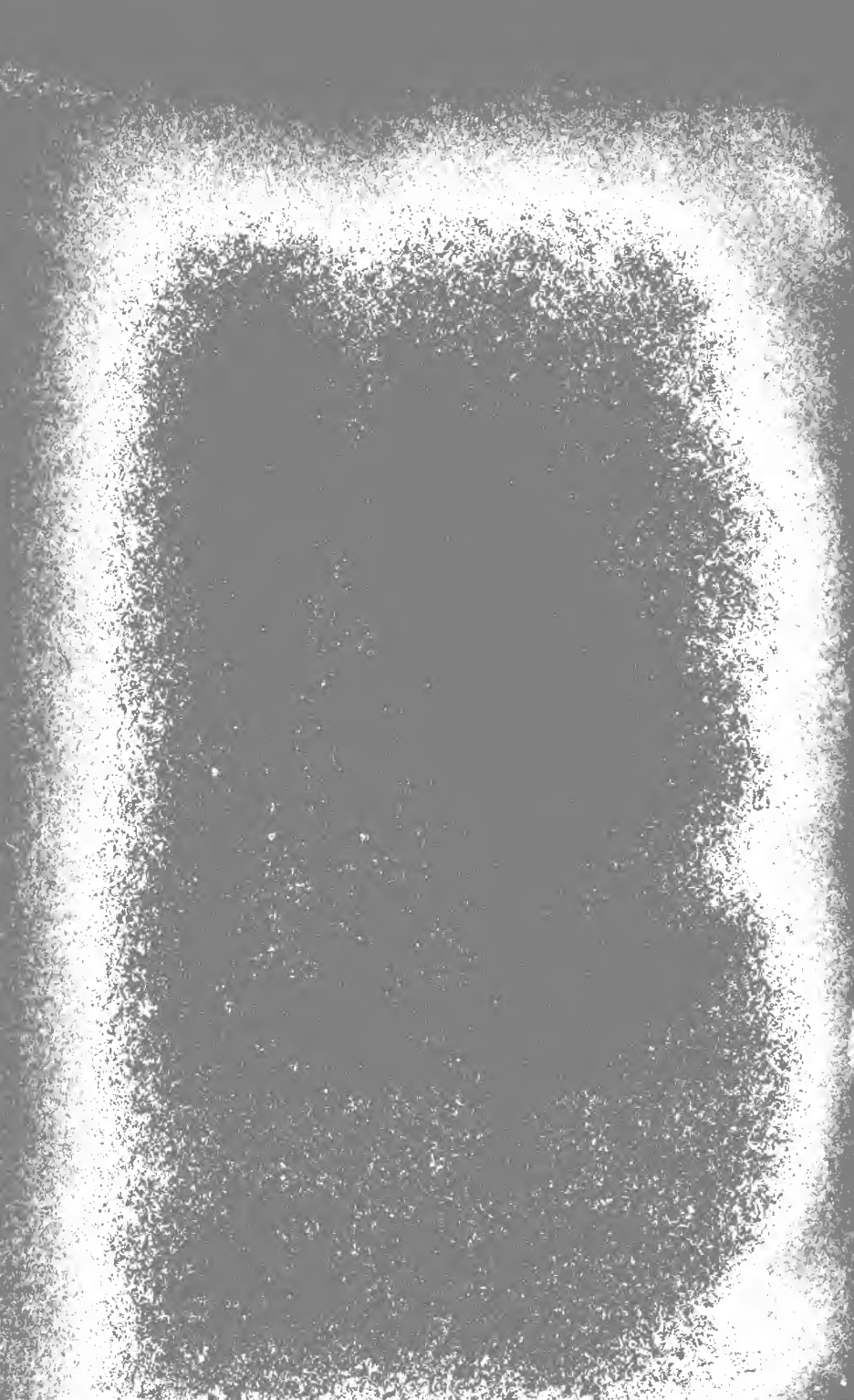
10. A university ought not to admit to its professional schools students who have not had a college course of liberal study, or its equivalent. A minimum course of two years of such study should be insisted upon. A four-year course should not be required for the two reasons (1) that it delays too long entrance upon active life-work, and (2) that it does not use the time and effort of the intending professional student to the best advantage.













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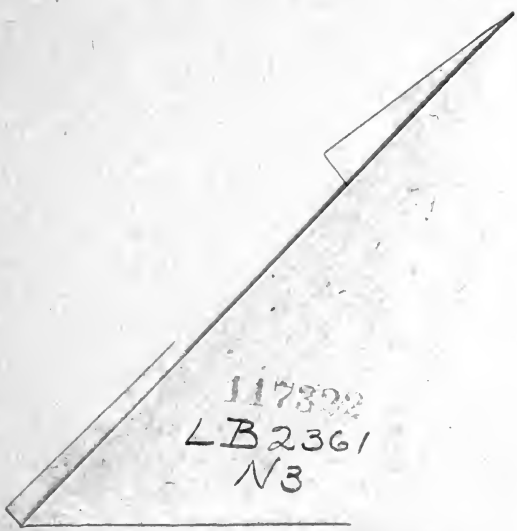
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