

ticable expenditure for material or administrative purposes, and with the idea of allowing the light of a noble institution to shine afar, to enter the darkest corners of the land, to stir dormant genius everywhere, to awaken every germ of scientific activity.

W J MCGEE.

*PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS AND THE LENGTH OF THE COLLEGE COURSE.**

STANDARD OF ADMISSION TO THE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS.

I HAVE pointed out that it is held to be settled policy at Columbia University that the several technical and professional schools shall rest upon a college course of liberal study as a foundation (although not necessarily upon a course four years in length), either at once or as soon as practicable. The School of Law has already been placed upon the basis of a graduate school, to take effect July 1, 1903. On December 20, 1898, the University Council recommended that the College of Physicians and Surgeons be made a graduate school as soon as such a step is financially practicable. The Schools of Applied Science have constantly in mind a similar step, and much consideration has been given by the faculty to the best way of bringing about the change without undue sacrifice. This policy, however, does not pass unchallenged. It has recently been criticised and opposed in a cogent and noteworthy argument by President Hadley, of Yale University, in his annual report for the year 1901-02, on the grounds (1) that it tends to make the professions exclusive in a bad sense, (2) that it leads to a remodeling of the college course to meet the needs of intending professional students, which remodeling is at least a

* From advanced sheets of the annual report of President Butler to the trustees of Columbia University.

doubtful experiment, and (3) that it establishes an unfortunate distinction between the universities which require a bachelor's degree as a condition of admission to the professional schools and those which make no such requirement. This policy is also criticised and opposed by many intelligent persons, trusted leaders of public opinion, not university teachers or administrators, who are impressed by the fact that the whole tendency of our modern educational system is to prolong unduly the period of preparation or studentship, with the result that an increasing number of young men are held back from active and independent participation in the practical work of life until they are nearly, or quite, thirty years of age. In the face of such objections as these it is obvious that we at Columbia must consider carefully the probable social and educational effects of the policy upon which we have entered.

The questions raised in the discussion of this policy are to be decided, it seems to me, from the standpoint of the duty of the university to the public and to its own educational ideals. Two interests are immediately at stake: the standards of professional study in a university, and the place of the American college in the higher education of the twentieth century. I doubt whether the two interests can be separated in any adequate consideration of the subject.

President Eliot, of Harvard University, impressively set forth the responsibilities and the opportunities of the learned professions in his address at the installation ceremonies on April 19 last, when he said:

It is plain that the future prosperity and progress of modern communities is hereafter going to depend much more than ever before on the large groups of highly trained men which constitute what are called the professions. The social and industrial powers, and the moral influences which strengthen and uplift modern society are no longer in the hands of legislatures, or polit-

real parties, or public men. All these political agencies are becoming secondary and subordinate influences. They neither originate nor lead; they sometimes regulate and set bounds, and often impede. The real incentives and motive powers which impel society forward and upward spring from those bodies of well-trained, alert, and progressive men known as the professions. They give effect to the discoveries or imaginings of genius. All the large businesses and new enterprises depend for their success on the advice and cooperation of the professions.

With such an ideal as this held up before the student of law, of medicine, of divinity, of teaching, of architecture or of applied science, what standard of excellence shall the university require of him when he enters upon his professional studies? Three answers seem to be possible: The university may require (1) the completion of a normal secondary school course of four years, and so put admission to the professional and technical schools on a plane with admission to college, or (2) the completion of the present college course of four years, or (3) the completion of a shortened college course.

When weighing the advantages and disadvantages of these several lines of action, it should be borne in mind that a uniform policy on the part of all universities in dealing with this question is not necessary and may not be desirable. We are directly concerned with the question so far as it concerns the duty and the interest of Columbia; but the universities having different social and educational needs to meet, and somewhat different ideals to labor for, may be wise in reaching a conclusion quite different from that which most commends itself to us. This consideration seems to me to meet the third of President Hadley's objections already referred to. Furthermore, the universities do not control admission to the practice of the professions, and it is not in their power, as it is certainly not their wish, to shut out from his chosen profession any competent person, whatever

his training or wherever it has been had. If the standards of professional study required by the universities are higher than the minimum fixed by law, no one will attend a university for professional study unless its standards appeal to him and unless he hopes to find ultimate gain by conforming to them at some expense of both time and money. On the other hand, if the universities make the minimum standards fixed by law their own—and only by so doing can they avoid discriminating against some one—then they seem to me to have abdicated their functions as leaders in American intellectual life. The result would quickly be seen, I am sure, in the falling off of popular favor and support. These facts appear to meet the first of President Hadley's objections. His second objection involves a discussion of the significance of the college course, a subject which I shall consider in its proper place.

Columbia University cannot be satisfied with a requirement of only secondary school graduation for admission to the professional and technical schools for several reasons.

1. Such students at 17 or 18 years of age (or, as should be the case, at 16 or 16½ years) are too immature to carry on a severe course of professional study with profit.

2. When such students predominate, or form a large proportion of the total number attending any given professional school, the teaching deteriorates and the instruction tends to become either superficial or unduly long drawn out and wasteful of time.

3. Other institutions in various parts of the country afford the fullest opportunity for students who are compelled to remain satisfied with the shortest possible preparation for the practice of a profession, and Columbia would not be justified in using its funds merely to add to a provision

which is already ample. Columbia offers the most generous assistance to students who are able and willing to meet its standards and who need help in order to carry on their studies, but is not willing to lower those standards at the cost of social and educational effectiveness.

4. Secondary school graduates, however well taught, are necessarily without the more advanced discipline in the study of the liberal arts and sciences and without that wider outlook on the world of nature and of man which it is the aim of the college to give. It is our hope and wish that those who hold professional or technical degrees from Columbia University will be not only soundly trained in their chosen professions, but liberally educated men as well. No stress is laid upon the college degree as a mere title, but it is held to stand, in the vast majority of cases, for greater maturity of mind and broader scholarship.

5. For Columbia University to admit students to the professional and technical schools upon the same terms as those by which admission to the college is gained, would be to throw the weight of our influence against college education in general and against Columbia College in particular. After a few years, no student who looked forward to a professional career would seek admission to Columbia College, or to any other, except those who had ample time and money to spare.

On the other hand, while I hold a secondary school education to be too low a standard for admission to professional study at Columbia University, personally I am of opinion that to insist upon graduation from the usual four years' college course is too high a standard (measured in terms of time) to insist upon, and an unsatisfactory one as well. My view of the matter is concurred in by the dean of

Columbia College, by the dean of the Faculty of Law, and by the dean of Teachers College, as will be seen by reference to their annual reports, which accompany this document and are a part of it.

My objections to making graduation from a four years' college course a prerequisite for professional study at Columbia University are mainly two:

1. I share the view, already alluded to, that the whole tendency of our present educational system is to postpone unduly the period of self-support, and I feel certain that public opinion will not long sustain a scheme of formal training which in its completeness includes a kindergarten course of two or three years, an elementary school course of eight years, a secondary school course of four years, a college course of four years, and a professional or technical school course of three or four years, followed by a period of apprenticeship on small wages or on no wages at all.

2. Four years is, in my opinion, too long a time to devote to the college course as now constituted, especially for students who are to remain in university residence as technical or professional students. President Patton, of Princeton University, voiced the sentiments of many of the most experienced observers of educational tendencies when he said that: "In some way that delightful period of comradeship, amusement, desultory reading, and choice of incongruous courses of what we are pleased to call study, which is characteristic of so many undergraduates, must be shortened in order that more time may be given to the strenuous life of professional equipment." For quite twenty years President Eliot has advocated this view and in arguments which have seemed to me unanswerable, under the conditions existing at Harvard, has urged that the degree of bachelor of arts be given by Harvard

College after three years of residence.*

At Columbia, and elsewhere, the practice of counting a year of professional study as a substitute for the fourth or senior year of the college course has in effect established a three years' college course for intending professional and technical students. The degree has been withheld until a year of professional study has been completed, in deference to tradition rather than from sound educational principle. In this way new conditions have been met without the appearance of shortening the college course. While the policy hitherto pursued in this regard was justified as a beginning toward a readjustment of the relations between the college and the professional and technical schools, it is hardly to be upheld as a final solution of the problems presented. From my point of view it is open to criticism in that it (1) shortens the college course without appearing to do so, (2) divides the interest of the student in a way that is satisfactory neither to the college nor to the faculties of the professional schools, and (3) fails to give the full support to a college course of purely liberal study which is so much to be desired.

There remains a third line of action, namely, that of basing admission to the professional and technical schools of the university upon a shortened course in Columbia College or its equivalent elsewhere. This I believe to be the wisest plan for Columbia University to adopt, as well as the one whose general adoption would result in the greatest public advantage.

* After this report was in type it was announced that hereafter the degree of A.B. will be conferred by Harvard College upon students who complete the requirements for the degree in three years at once and without an additional year's delay, as heretofore. Somewhat similar announcements have also been made by the University of Pennsylvania and by Brown University.

LENGTH OF THE COLLEGE COURSE.

One consideration of vital importance appears to have been overlooked in the numerous discussions of this whole matter, and that is the fact that there is no valid reason why the college course should be of one uniform length for all classes of students. The unnecessary assumption of the contrary view has greatly complicated the entire question, both in the public and in the academic mind. It must be remembered that for the intending student of law, medicine or applied science who goes to college, three or four additional years of university residence and study are in prospect after the bachelor's degree has been obtained. For the college student who looks forward to a business career, on the other hand, academic residence closes with graduation from college. For the latter class, therefore, the college course may well be longer than for the former. While two or three years of purely college life and study may be ample for the man who proposes to remain in the university as a professional or as a technical student, three, or even four, years may be desirable for him who at college graduation leaves the university, its atmosphere, its opportunities, and its influence, forever.

It must be remembered, too, that the four years' college course is merely a matter of convention, and that there are many exceptions to the rule. The Harvard College course was at one time but three years in length, and the collegiate course at the Johns Hopkins University has been three years in length from its establishment. The normal period of residence for an undergraduate at both the English and the Scottish universities is three years. President Wayland, of Brown University, who was in so many ways a true prophet of educational advance, devised a plan for a normal three years' college course over half

a century ago. The question is not so much one of the time spent upon a college course as it is one of the quality of the work done and the soundness of the mental and moral training given. The peculiar service which the college exists to perform may be done in one case in two years, in another in three, in another in four, and in still another not at all.

Since 1860 the changes in American educational conditions have been revolutionary, and as one result the content of the A.B. degree has been wholly altered and that degree has been elevated, at Columbia College at least, to a point almost exactly two years in advance of that at which it then was. In other words, despite the fact that college admission requirements have been raised and much of the instruction once given in college is now given in the secondary schools, particularly the public high schools, the bachelor's degree has been held steadily at a point four years distant from college entrance, with the result that the average age of college students at graduation has greatly increased. Since 1880 the average age of the students entering Columbia College has increased exactly one year, and while no adequate statistics for 1860 are available, it appears to be true that the average age of admission in 1880 was one full year higher than in 1860. The registrar has made a careful examination of the official records, and reports that in Columbia College we are demanding two years more of time and work for the degree of bachelor of arts than was required in 1860, and one year more of time and work than was required in 1880. President Hyde, of Bowdoin College, has recently said that 'Nearly all the distinguished alumni of Bowdoin College graduated at about the present average age of entrance, and were well launched on their professional careers at about the age at which our students now graduate.' He cited the

cases of Jacob Abbott and William Pitt Fessenden, who were graduated before they were seventeen; Longfellow, who was graduated at eighteen; Franklin Pierce, John A. Andrew, Fordyce Barker, and Egbert Smyth at nineteen; and William P. Frye and Melville W. Fuller at twenty. Instances might readily be multiplied from the records of the American colleges. The recent statistics compiled by Dean Wright, of the academical department of Yale University, which show the average age of graduation of the members of the class of 1863 at Yale to have been 22 years, 10 months, and 17 days and that of the members of the class of 1902 to have been 22 years, 10 months, and 20 days, point to what appears to be a striking exception, not yet explained, to the general rule.

So long as there were no graduate schools, and therefore no genuine universities, in the United States, and when the bachelor's degree was the highest academic distinction to be gained in residence, it was sound academic and public policy to make the requirements for the degree of bachelor of arts as high as possible. It was the only mark of scholarship that the colleges could give. As a result, the average age at graduation increased. Now, however, conditions have entirely changed. Nearly, or quite one half of the work formerly done in college for the degree of bachelor of arts is now done in the rapidly increasing number of secondary schools, particularly public high schools, and no small part of it is required for admission to college. This does not appear if the comparison be restricted to admission requirements in Greek, Latin and mathematics; but it is clearly evident when the present admission requirements in English, history, the modern European languages and the natural sciences are taken into account. The standard of scholarship in this country is no longer set by the undergraduate courses in

the colleges or by the time devoted to them, but by the post-graduate instruction in the universities and by the requirements demanded for the degree of doctor of philosophy.

These being the undisputed facts, it would appear to be wise, and possible, to treat the length of the college course and the requirements, both in time and in accomplishment, for the degree of bachelor of arts from the standpoint of present-day needs and the largest social service.

In my opinion it is already too late to meet the situation by shortening the college course for all students to three years, although such action would be a decided step forward so far as the interests of intending professional and technical students are concerned. When President Eliot first proposed a three years' course for Harvard College, the suggestion was, I think, a wise one. But in the interval conditions have changed again. If we at Columbia should be willing to go no farther than to reduce the length of the college course from four years to three, we should (1) find it impracticable both on financial and on educational grounds to require that course as prerequisite for admission to the Schools of Applied Science, and, possibly, to the School of Medicine, and (2) we should be unable to resist the pressure for further reconstruction and rearrangement that would be upon us before our work was completed and in operation. My own belief is that Columbia University will perform the greatest public service if it establishes two courses in Columbia College, one of two years and one of four years—the former to be included in the latter—and if it requires the satisfactory completion of the shorter course, or its equivalent elsewhere, for admission to the professional and technical schools of the university. By taking this step we should retain the college with its two years of liberal studies as an in-

tegral element in our system, shorten by two years the combined periods of secondary school, college, and professional school instruction, and yet enforce a standard of admission to our professional schools which, both in quantity and in quality, is on a plane as high as the Columbia degree of bachelor of arts of 1860, which was recognized as conforming to a very useful standard of excellence. At the same time we should retain the four years' course with all its manifest advantages and opportunities for those who look forward to a scholarly career, and for as many of those who intend to enter upon some active business after graduation as can be induced to follow it.

Under such a plan we should have in Columbia College four different classes of students: (1) those who were taking the shorter course of two years in preparation for a technical and professional course, and who would therefore look forward to a total university residence of five or six years; (2) those who were taking the shorter course of two years, but without any thought of subsequent professional or technical study; (3) those who felt able to give the time necessary to take the longer course of four years before entering a professional or technical school; and (4) those who, as now, take the four years' college course without any intention of technical or professional study. The second class of students would be a new and highly desirable class, and would be, for the most part, made up of earnest young men seeking a wider and more thorough scholarly training than the secondary school can offer, but unable to devote four years to that end. The third class of students would be able, by a proper selection of studies in the later years of their college course, either to enter a professional school with advanced standing or to anticipate some of the preliminary professional studies and to devote the time

so gained to more intensive professional work. Undoubtedly many students who now take a four years' undergraduate course with no professional or technical end in view would take the shorter course, and that only, but, on the other hand, numbers of students would come to college for a course of two years who when obliged to choose between a four years' course and none at all are compelled to give up college altogether. The final result of the changes would certainly be to increase the total number of students taking a college course of one length or another.

The dean of Columbia College is of the opinion that such a shortened course of two years as is contemplated by this suggestion could readily be made to include all the studies now prescribed at Columbia for candidates for the degree of bachelor of arts. This shortened course would, therefore, take on something of the definitiveness and purpose which in many cases the rapid developments of recent years have removed from undergraduate study; for it goes without saying that no effort would be spared to make such a two years' course as valuable as possible, both for intellectual training and for the development of character. The student would be a gainer, not a loser, by the change.

THE DEGREES OF BACHELOR OF ARTS AND OF MASTER OF ARTS.

If Columbia College should offer two courses in the liberal arts and sciences, one of two years and one of four years in length, the second including the first, the question would at once arise as to what degrees or other marks of academic recognition would be conferred upon students who had satisfactorily completed them.

Two answers appear to be possible. First, we may withhold the bachelor's degree until the completion of the longer course, and grant some new designation to

those who satisfactorily complete the shorter course. This has been done at the University of Chicago, where graduates of the junior college course of two years are made associates in arts. Or we may degrade—as it is called—the bachelor's degree from the artificial position in which the developments of the last forty years have placed it, and confer it upon the graduates of the shorter course of two years, and give the degree of master of arts for the longer course of four years. The latter alternative would be my own preference. Such a plan would bring the degree of bachelor of arts two years earlier than now and would place it substantially on a par with the bachelor's degree in France, the *Zeugniß der Reife* in Germany, and the ordinary degree in course as conferred by the English and the Scottish universities. It would also be substantially on a par with the Columbia College degree of 1860.

In this connection it must be remembered that it is not the A.B. degree of to-day which is so much extolled and so highly esteemed as the mark of a liberal education gained by hard study and severe discipline, but that of one and two generations ago. The A.B. degree of to-day is a very uncertain quantity, and time alone will show whether it means much or little.

The degree of master of arts is an entirely appropriate reward for the completion of a college course, under the new conditions proposed, four years in length. This degree has been put to many varied uses and has no generally accepted significance. In Scotland it is given in place of the degree of bachelor of arts at the close of three very short years of undergraduate study. In England it signifies that the holder is a bachelor of arts, that he has lived for a certain minimum number of terms after obtaining the bachelor's degree, and that he has paid certain fees.

In Germany it is usually included in the degree of doctor of philosophy. In the United States the degree is more often than not a purely honorary designation; although in recent years the stronger universities have guarded it strictly and now grant it for a minimum period of graduate study for one year in residence. At the meeting of the Association of American Universities in February last there was a very interesting discussion on the subject of this degree, and the divergence of policy in regard to it was made plainly evident. As an intermediate degree between those of bachelor of arts and doctor of philosophy, that of master of arts has been and is very useful at Columbia. It marks the close of a period of serious resident graduate study, and is an appropriate reward for the work of those university students who have neither the inclination nor the peculiar abilities and temperament to fit themselves for successful examination for the degree of doctor of philosophy. At the same time it must be admitted that the rapid development of the elective system and the widely different standards of the scores of colleges from which our graduate students come, have almost wiped out the distinction between the senior year in Columbia College and the first year of graduate study. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the fixing of the degree of master of arts at the close of a four years' undergraduate course would involve no real alteration in the standard required on the part of those coming to Columbia from other institutions. For students of Columbia College it would bring the degree within reach after four years of residence instead of five.

In the case of candidates for the degree of doctor of philosophy, the completion of the longer college course, or its equivalent elsewhere, would of course be required, and also the same minimum period of post-

graduate resident study as now. There would be no alteration in the time necessary or the standard now set for that degree, which as conferred at Columbia is recognized as conforming to the highest and best standards.

With the courses in applied science and in medicine fixed at four years, to base them upon a two years' college course would be to elevate them to a proper university standard and to ensure the best possible class of students. The Law School and the professional course in Teachers College could easily be put upon the same basis.

Reflection and a careful study of the facts will make it apparent that these suggestions are less radical than seems to be the case on first sight. They at least offer a solution to a generally recognized problem, one which has often been pointed to but toward the solution of which little progress has been made. I shall seek an early opportunity of bringing them before the university council and the several faculties for full consideration and discussion.

THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE.

Should Columbia University adopt such a policy as has been outlined, and should the same or a similar policy commend itself to the governing bodies of any other American universities whose problems are similar to ours, a development already in progress throughout the country would be hastened. As the public high schools multiply and strengthen they will tend more and more to give the instruction now offered in the first year, or first two years, of the college course. In so far, they will become local colleges, but without the characteristic or the attractiveness of student residence. Furthermore, the time would sooner come when colleges, excellent in ideals and rich in teaching power but without the resources necessary to carry

on a four years' course of instruction satisfactorily, will raise the requirements for admission to a proper point and then concentrate all their strength upon a thoroughly sound course of two years leading to the bachelor's degree. More depends upon the strict enforcement of proper standards of admission to college than is generally believed; that is at present the weakest point in college administration. The general standard of college education in the United States would be strengthened more if the weaker colleges would fix and rigidly enforce proper entrance requirements and concentrate all their money and energies upon two years of thorough college work than if they continue to spread a college course over four years with admission secured on nominal terms or on none at all.

The policy outlined would, I think, largely increase the number of students seeking a college education, and many who might enter one of the stronger colleges for the two years' course would remain for four years. The loss of income due to the dropping out of students after two years of residence would be more than made good very soon by the large increase in college attendance.

As the system of higher education in the United States has developed it has become apparent that we have substituted three institutions—secondary school, college and university—for the two—secondary school and university—which exist in France and Germany. The work done in the United States by the best colleges is done in France and Germany one half by the secondary school and one half by the university. The training given in Europe differs in many ways from that given here, but from an administrative point of view the comparison just made is substantially correct. The college, as we have it, is peculiar to our own national system of education, and is

perhaps its strongest, as it certainly is its most characteristic, feature. It breaks the sharp transition which is so noticeable in Europe between the close surveillance and prescribed order of the secondary school and the absolute freedom of the university. Its course of liberal study comes just at the time in the student's life to do him most good, to open and inform his intelligence and to refine and strengthen his character. Its student life, social opportunities, and athletic sports are all additional elements of usefulness and of strength. It has endeared itself to three or four generations of the flower of our American youth and it is more useful to-day than at any earlier time.

For all of these reasons I am anxious to have it preserved as part of our educational system and so adjusted to the social and educational conditions which surround us that a college training may be an essential part of the higher education of an American whether he is destined to a professional career or to a business occupation. It seems to me clear that if the college is not so adjusted it will, despite its recent rapid growth, lose its prestige and place of honor in our American life, and that it may eventually disappear entirely, to the great damage of our whole educational system.

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER.

*ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE
BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.*

III.

THE UPPER AIR AND AURORAS.

THE present liquid ocean, neglecting everything for the moment but the water, was at a previous period of the earth's history part of the atmosphere, and its condensation has been brought about by the gradual cooling of the earth's surface. This resulting ocean is subjected to the pressure of the remaining uncondensed