almost prohibitive. In calling attention to the suitability, if not superiority, of acetone as a decolorizer in Gram's method of staining bacteria I briefly referred to the suitability of acetone in the process of staining sections (*Journal* of the American Medical Association, Volume 75, page 1017, October 9, 1920). Of course the well-known use of acetone in dehydrating preparatory to embedding is also employed.

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WEALTH AND BENEFACTIONS

Now comes Dr. Pritchett with the hint that accumulated wealth can not even be *given away* to the benefit of the public. And the question is—what ground is left on which to defend large fortunes? Socialists have always declared against them. The one defense which they have never quite gotten round is that wealth makes benefactions possible and supports the public good in a way that this could not be done—or *would* not be done—by small contributions or general assessment. Millions of curses on the octopus have been checked by the thought that—perhaps, after all— . . . . considering the universities— . . . . and then there's the science of medicine— . . . . and then to think of art— . . . . and after all we do need *philanthropists*— . . . . Without such thoughts as these, who would defend the poor rich man? Mr. Pritchett does not tell us whether he will or not. The evident gloom of spirit in which he writes shows that he is groping after truth (not a bad thing to grope after). It might even indicate a fear that when the truth is found it may be disagreeable. It surely would be if it told us that our standard argument for great fortunes is mere *buncum*.

But this question just now is before scientific men. How will they handle it? Presumably if the accepted solution proves false others will be tested. At least the problem will be analyzed. What are the alternatives? If money can not safely be given away in large sums, how about small sums? The corrupting effect might thus be distributed so that no one man or institution would suffer so much. As an extreme supposition the whole fortune might be turned into the public treasury and every man's tax bill decreased accordingly.

Of course, the fortune might be left to one or more heirs (presumably incapable of corruption). In this case the fund might either endow a permanent aristocracy or the problem might be solved by the wasting of the money. Neither of these solutions would find many champions among thoughtful men.

To suggest that the rich man should give away his own income or accumulations does not help. Mr. Pritchett's report does not assume that the injury done by gifts is in any way determined by their immediate source.

The one remaining choice would seem to be to manage a very lucrative business in such a way that profits shall be distributed as earned among all concerned and even shared with the public by reducing prices when their size becomes unseemly. This, of course, is rank labor unionism and has been answered a thousand times by men of good "business judgment" who are accumulating fortunes. It is only mentioned here to complete the list of possible solutions.

The writer of this modest inquiry finds himself groping among these possible alternatives for a solution that is better than the one employed hitherto. He would like to see some incomes, now derived from *private taxation*, reduced to the point that ledger accounts could be published without scandal, but beyond that his fear of socialism almost makes him willing to incur the risks of injury which attend the acceptance for his own institution of a share of that embarrassing money of which Mr. Pritchett writes, rather than see our rich men rush into "untried experiments."

Meantime, he wishes to say that the above paragraphs are not written in jest. The difficulties suggested in Mr. Pritchett's report may be more real than we like to admit, and in that case the alternative solutions must be faced. What if Mr. Pritchett and the socialists were both right?

MODEST INQUIRER

QUOTATIONS

RESEARCH AND TEACHING

I HAVE recently been reading the programs of the meetings of representative American learned societies and it is astonishing to find the rapidly growing numbers of the com-

munications which originate with the employees of the great business activities of the country. These papers are by no means wholly of an applied or utilitarian character. There is an abundance of pure science, of abstract discussion, obviously encouraged by the business administrations in question. In other words, the promotion of pure science has been acknowledged as exceedingly good business. The American business man has been quick to appreciate the value of research, once its meaning was brought home to him, and he is now enthusiastic in opening new paths to hiding-places of nature. That such paths are apt to lead undeviatingly from his own private domain is here of secondary importance.

The reaction of all this on the professor may well be looked at with misgiving. The college in the future, as heretofore, will necessarily insist on the primary importance of teaching. Instructors come to us with functionally well-equipped brains, aglow with the brightness of a young man's ardor, strong in the beautiful hope of achievement and with youth's illusions all undimmed—only to be forever confronted by the elusive response of the average student. Nothing is so deadening as the prolonged contact with the uninformed, the indifferent; for it keeps a low standard of comparison always in view. Eventually a man will measure his own mental stature by its elevation above that humble level. If the incentives to a stimulating competition, to an emulation among professional compeers, are also lacking, the distortion of intellectual values may be complete. A persistent urge, like a physical field of force, however weak, is a very dangerous agency. Watching sleeplessly, like Satan, over the course of things, it may even convert a faculty of high aims and specifically equipped scholarship into a body of schoolmasters. The exalted obligation incident to exceptional training is creative, an enlargement of the boundaries of knowledge, a new voice in art; but its fruition may degenerate into some academically dignified clerkship. A mute inglorious Darwin may be detecting new group affinities among old courses, or piecing together the parts of some academic picture puzzle. It is not the strong bias, but the monotonous continuity of petty bias that quenches. At some instant of flickering the sacred flame is blown out.

In the end, I fear, the trusts, as we fondly call them, will have absorbed and assimilated *l'élan vital,* the soul of the university. It is they who will point out to our bewildered gaze the sweep of new horizons and the flotsam from undiscovered shores. Our faculties will have to teach what they have been taught by the great business corporations. These will hereafter break new pathways into the unknown, and it will be for us to tell the uninformed the Ultima Thule of their progress. The university will be the humble expository mechanism of the intellectual accomplishments of commercial enterprise. In brief, there will be a complete inversion of the method by which the world's knowledge has deepened in the past.

If one looks, for instance, at the highly ingenious contrivances by which the marvels of the Hertzian wave have recently been brought to the appreciation of the people, one is struck by the appearance on every clamp, every ferrule, every coil, every tube, almost on every plate and screw of the mysterious symbol, PAT. This PAT. is a cipher more potent than any formula of Cagliostro. It is behind an array of PAT. that the wisdom of the future will be entrenched, and above which so much of it as may be vouchsafed us will be broadcast. Our function will resemble the town crier's, to herald the information somebody else has wrested from the infinite. We shall still be interested and keenly watchful, no doubt, like the little cherubs with wrapt gaze at the feet of the Sistine Madonna; but the great inspiration will float majestically above us.—*Dean Barus in the annual report of the president of Brown University.*

THE TECHNICAL PAPERS OF THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

THE National Geographic Society announces a series of technical papers embodying the scientific results of its Katmai, Alaska, expeditions. The first number entitled "The origin and mode of emplacement of the great tuff deposit of the valley of ten thousand smokes," by C. N. Fenner, is now ready.

Dr. Fenner's paper gives details of the hot sandflow not included in the nontechnical volume, "The valley of ten thousand smokes,"