

**College Education--  
Do Critics Justify  
Their Own Assertions?**

Readers of the Outlook have been considerably interested by the publication in recent issues of articles from the pens of college professors and heads of various institutions of learning in reply to certain facts and figures set forth by the worthy editor of the Ladies' Home Journal, Mr. Edward Bok, which, as a result of his correspondence with several hundred college students, purports to prove that a college education is in most cases a failure, in that it fails to give a proper knowledge of spelling, grammar, writing, and punctuation. He gives numerous examples of poorly written, misspelled letters he received and as a further evidence of lack of knowledge of business ethics, accuses the 1,426 students who did not reply to his letter of inquiry, enclosing a stamped return envelope, of being guilty of discourtesy. That the average college graduate does not know how to spell correctly and shows astonishing lack of knowledge of grammar and the principles of letter-writing we will agree with Mr. Bok to a certain extent, although we would hesitate to assert that a college student's education was absolutely useless to him because he could not write and spell correctly. We quote herewith a few thoughts along that line by Douglas W. Johnson, professor of physiography, Columbia University, who says:

"A careful investigator will want to be assured that the replies which reached Mr. Bok were fairly representative of college seniors as a whole. Mr. Bok himself, with his characteristic viewpoint, concludes that those who failed to reply include men who disgrace our colleges more effectually than do those who answer his letter of inquiry. May it not be that the reverse is true? Our best college students are not only busy with routine work but are active in many other phases of college life, such as literary societies, college papers, oratorical contests, debates, and so on.

"Mr. Bok does not explain just how a man can, without his knowledge or consent, become morally obliged to expend part of his valuable time on everybody who chooses to mail him a list of questions and a 2-cent stamp. Were Mr. Bok's position tenable, it would be a piece of impertinence to send a busy man a stamped envelope, for one would thereby force him into the disagreeable necessity of replying whether he wanted to or not, and whether or not he could afford the time. But a stamped envelope is not a device for putting the other fellow "in a hole" and making him answer. It is rather a courtesy which the sender owes the recipient of the letter, in order that the labor of replying may be made as light as possible."

On the other hand, says the Outlook, those who defend the college on the ground that it is not the function of the college to teach spelling, writing, and grammar appear to us to miss the real question. The college does not merely teach, it certifies. The degree of A. B. signifies, or ought to signify, that he who possesses it is fairly well educated. He who cannot write an intelligible English letter is not fairly well educated. The object of an entrance examination is to ascertain whether the candidate for admission

is sufficiently educated to enter college. The object of the final examination is to ascertain whether the candidate for graduation is sufficiently educated to graduate. If he cannot write an intelligible English letter, he ought not to be allowed to enter college; if he has lost that ability, he ought not to be allowed to graduate. It is not the business of college to teach arithmetic or geography. But if the student cannot perform a simple sum in addition and does not know what is the capital of the United States, he should not be allowed to enter college, still less to graduate with college honors. It is not the business of the college to teach English grammar; but it is the business of the college to ascertain whether its students know enough of English grammar to write grammatically. The degree of A. B. ought to mean that the Bachelor of Arts knows the fundamentals of the language of his country.—Omaha Excelsior.

**"Even as You and I"---  
Are Our Professors  
While Vacationing**

The new student who stands in line previous to registration doubtless imagines that the grey-bearded, bespectacled professors seated behind the long tables are veritable tyrants of the classroom. He supposes that they with sternness conduct their classes and allow nothing of a worldly nature to even enter their thoughts. With fear and trembling, and dire forebodings that he will be caught unprepared by these same gloating educators, he awaits the call to duty.

In order to dispel any illusions he may have had concerning these august faculty gentlemen the new student should observe some of their antics when they take a vacation.

To see a sedate professor of law dressed in corduroys, hip boots, flannel shirt and felt hat, wading in a mountain stream attempting to hook the elusive trout, is a novel sight. A certain dean looks unfamiliar but happy in a fishing boat on a Swedish fjord. One could scarcely believe that the brawny, tanned fellow chopping down the big tree in front of his hut in the Adirondacks is a well-known instructor of the youth of Nebraska. But perhaps the strangest thing is to behold an individual with a "hot dog" sandwich in one hand and a straw hat in the other, riding the "shoot the chutes" at Coney Island, and to have a bystander point him out as a member of the faculty of the University of Nebraska, out "seeing the sights."

Really it is astounding to see the learned preceptors enjoying themselves like anybody else. The reason is that their severity is assumed from habit and at heart they are as worldly as the rest of us. If you have your doubts, try asking one of them about it.

**Harvard Season Opens.**

Cambridge, Mass., Sept. 16.—Harvard opened the football season this afternoon when sixty-seven candidates, including the first string of last season's substitutes, reported to Coach Haughton for preliminary practice.

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