
Obituary of a Noble Experiment.

Accustomed as we were to colorful press notices of the "Experimental College" of the University of Wisconsin, we weresomewhat taken aback at the please-omit-flowers simplicity of the announcement, made some months ago, of the discontinuance of the experiment. We have waited patiently for a friend's uelogy of the deceased, and our patience has been rewarded -- with an autopsy.

"A Most Lamentable Comedy" is the title Professor Grant Showerman, of the University of Wisconsin, gives to his obituary notice of the "Guinea Pig College" (School and Society, vol. 33, no. 850, April 11, 1931). The gist of his findings seems to be that the child suffered from malnutrition (which was due to paternal neglect and maternal ineptitude); complicated by valvular insufficiency, incompatibility, and softening of the brain; and that death came (mercifully) from spontaneous combustion.

The paternal neglect was suppld by the Faculty of Letters and Science, which gave a "vote of courtesy" to the project when it was proposed by the new president, Glenn Frank. The Faculty voted with its tongue in its cheek. The maternal ineptitude was supplied by the erstwhile president of another college (Meikeljohn, of Amherst), a man of "ideas", and his associates in the experiment. Malnutrition resulted because the intellectual fodder bought with the state's funds (lavishly supplied, thinks Professor Showerman) was of the monotonous, scurvy-producing type - Greek civilization "in all its ramifications and implications."

Valvular insufficiency was the net result of no grades and 'study for its own sake.' The faculty was under compulsion; the students were not. Incompatibility naturally grew out of the "ill-judged and offensive" tactics of the sponsors and promoters of the thirty-three "interrogational profundities" he finds in the report literature of the Experimental director and his associates. For proof of spontaneous combustion we can only point to the X-marking-the-place-where-the-body-was-found in the press notices that the experiment was at an end.

So much for the experiment. Our larger interest is in the guinea pigs, the young men and women who were the lab material. Prof. Showerman gives us one glimpse of them, in a paragraph which he takes from a university official: "One of the chief reasons for the failure of the College is the utter absence of discipline. Its director contended there should be no discipline imposed from outside; if there were any, it should evolve from within the student group. Result -- none ever evolved. The College was an ulcer of bad conduct from first to last. Three times as much breakage in windows, doors, plumbing, fire hose and furniture as in other dormitory units."

The tax-payers of the State of Wisconsin pay out many millions each year to the State University for "smarter men and women." One wonders how soon they will be smart enough to ask for "better men and women." And in the meantime the Catholic on the sidelines, remembering that these men and women have souls as well as bodies, would change the title of Prof. Showerman's article from "A Most Lamentable Comedy," to "An Avoidable and Most Lamentable Tragedy." Seared souls aren't funny.

A Heck of a Lot You Care About Your Mother.

If you get caught on a "big party" tonight yourfirst thought will be, "This will kill my mother." Parties and Hovenas don't mix, and there is a Hovena for mothers going on now. PRAYERS: Deceased: The mother of Ed Fallon, '26; relatives of Edw. F. O'Malley and Jos. H. Dumeo; aunt of Bill Ayres; four friends of students. Ill: J. Krusiec's father, seriously burned; a relative of Frank Kellogg; a great benefactor of the students; John Tunnoy, whose illness has caused his retirement from school. Five special intontions.