

The level of interest, enthusiasm and scholarship on the part of individual scholars is high - as high, perhaps, as is the level anywhere. The standards set by Child, Hadley, Goodwin, and Gildersleeve have been in recent years maintained by Jastrow, Clay, ^{Sinitice}~~and~~ Breasted ^{Sinitice} and their colleagues, whose ^{quite} sound, aggressive scholarship is quite as well known and recognized abroad as at home. There is, moreover, a good deal of activity in the field at large. Thus, the demand for teachers is such that young men receive posts at modest salaries soon after graduation - with the result that their training is abbreviated and, in the long run, their scholarship suffers. It would seem that this demand is, however, at least in part, conventional in nature, rather than

an indication of enthusiasm on the part of schools and colleges; teachers of Latin, Greek, Ancient History, etc. are part of the accepted machinery of higher education; young men, therefore, find posts, but, as we shall see, with too little incentive or opportunity beyond.

When, however, in discussing the status of humanistic studies in the United States, we pass from the devotion of the individual scholars to general conditions, a different story must be told. Of course, as I have said, great scholars still exist; colleges and universities still support chairs and departments. But, since the days of President Gilman and President Harper, no American university president has done for humanistic studies what has been done for science, medicine, engineering, etc.; nor have the humanistic groups themselves vigorously asserted the importance of humanistic studies, however strongly individuals may have prosecuted their respective interests. In a way, this phenomenon may be interpreted as simple righting of the balance; the humanities had had the whole field for centuries; latterly science and the professions have come into their own. The truth is not, however, that too much has been done for science and medicine; in fact, enough has not been done for either; but meanwhile, during this period, the humanities have been, to a certain extent, officially overlooked. The country has been scientifically and materially, not humanistically, minded; and the universities have simply reflected the dominant forces of the time, taking, on the whole, no broader view than the general American college-graduated public.

The consequences are plain; as respects the status of humanism in the United States, eminent scholars are somewhat depressed; they show the

→ It was the industrial era
that brought about the practical abolition
of poverty in this country! - not colleges or
scholars!

timidity and modesty that characterize persons who are not used to having or expecting much; they do what they can as individuals, with little, often no, clerical help; but certain though they are of the importance of the interest they represent, they have developed towards the outside world, and indeed towards other aspects of university activity, something like an inferiority complex.

This psychological situation has already had a distinct effect.

In certain fields there are no recruits; Jastrow's professorship at Pennsylvania, Clay's at Yale, the chairs of Bloomfield and Haupt at Johns Hopkins, and others likely to be vacant in the near future, cannot be filled at all with American scholars. While the volume of production is said to be large and much of it of the highest quality, the humanistic career does not attract men as it attracted them a generation ago. Business and law exert a strong pull in direct competition; they are aided by pressure from families bound to be concerned over the future of their children. To be sure, in respect to salaries, the general outlook is universally poor - no worse in the humanities than, on the whole, in the sciences. But industry and the professions offer the scientist an alternative or a supplement. Moreover, scientists have latterly more and more received budgets or outside subventions which enable them, despite personal hardship, to undertake large tasks. In the field of humanities, with exceptions too few to affect the general result, no such conditions obtain. It is well nigh impossible for a scholar to engage on a large task, unless he (1) possesses independent means, or (2) finances himself by first producing for purely commercial reasons textbooks representing not his ideals, but the market's capacity of assimilation, (3) increases his academic income by instruction in summer schools, popular lectures and writing popular articles. To the difficulties of carrying on

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a large task, even on these terms, is added the paralyzing doubt as to whether, the task achieved, a publisher can be found. The university presses are inadequately financed; the book trade has been so commercialized that there is hardly a shred of professional or scholarly interest left in it. The officers are informed that it is even now at times easier to procure publication of really scholarly work by an American professor abroad than in the United States; that important manuscripts representing years of effort are growing obsolete in desk drawers; that American scholars produce brief articles because these alone can hope to be printed; ~~and~~ these have to be cut to the bone and ~~that~~ even so, publication is years in arrears.

The picture may be too dark; it may involve the assumption that conditions are better in other academic fields than they really are; but it represents the way in which the general situation is viewed by the greatest and most substantial of American humanists. Discount the description above given as we will, it is obvious that the humanistic career in the United States is to-day less inviting than a career in science and less inviting than a similar career on the continent, despite the fact that at the moment, we possess, while Europe lacks, the material resources requisite to encourage humanistic studies.

Indisputably, the trend of modern development is in the direction of the pure and applied sciences. But man cannot live by comfort and convenience alone. Even in Europe, scholars are less buoyant than in the days when Gildersleeve crossed the ocean to worship at the shrine of the great German savants. The rise of the sciences, enormous material expansion, the spread of popular education have all tended, relatively, to reduce the immediate importance of the humanities. Nevertheless, a strong tradition embodied in accepted standards of culture, in university prestige, in the patronage of governments and learned academies still protects humanistic study abroad. No such tradition and no such bulwarks exist in

Even now too much will as too little publication.

America; on the contrary, purely cultural interests have in America to fight ^{How about the fine arts?} hard for their place in the sun. Now and then a scholar has been fortunate in procuring the support of a wealthy patron; in a few scattered instances museums and institutions have obtained special funds for the support of attractive enterprises; but, on the whole, there has been in America no concerted and systematic effort to support and encourage learning comparable to the support and interest available for the development of other intellectual and social concerns.

Aside from the general considerations just advanced, there is a peculiar timeliness in concerted effort at this time. Vast stretches of human history are at present mere guesswork; much that has been accepted needs to be revised. The war has thrown open - especially in the Near East - novel opportunities for throwing light upon all the problems connected with the history of human civilization. What Breasted and Reisner are doing in Egypt to clear up the early history of human civilization, Rostovtzeff is in position to do in Syria as respects the Hellenistic period, and the American School at Athens is in position to do in Athens as respects the most brilliant and disastrous period in Greek history. The scholars are here; the imagination of young students would be fired by the opportunity to cooperate in voyages of discovery, comparable in fascination to the researches on the atom or the distant heavens. No other nation now commands the money needed to prosecute inquiries in this field. The money exists here, but interest and organization have hitherto been lacking.

Analysis of the nature and status of humanistic studies shows the following items, all of which must be considered in the development of a program for the encouragement of humanistic studies:

1. University departments

Larger sums (whether derived from increased fees or from increased endowments) must be procured, in order to reduce the routine burden carried by productive scholars, and in order to give them clerical or other assistance, especially while they are engaged on exacting tasks in the field of research or criticism. Perhaps the faculties are themselves in part to blame for their situation; for they construe their teaching and administrative responsibilities so seriously that they are unhappy unless they are mothering their students; and this would appear in some places to be as true of M.A. students as of B.A.'s. The education^{al} problems - arising partly out of inferior previous preparation of students, partly out of defective university organization - must be solved by the universities themselves. In so far as general funds are required for the development of existing departments, or the creation of new departments, coöperation on the part of the General Education Board is in principle easy.

2. Special appropriations

A good budget will under ordinary circumstances support from year to year both teaching and research in a department of medicine, a department of chemistry, a department of mathematics. Occasionally some field enterprise may be undertaken which calls for an unusual outlay - an astronomical expedition, for example - but such enterprises are relatively rare. In the humanistic field, the conditions are distinctly different. The regular budget will support teaching and small-scale research; but a large task at once calls for an extraordinary expenditure over a term of years, and on large, occasional tasks the life and vigor of great scholars depend. Such tasks once finished, however, no similar expenditure may ever again be required. For instance ~~(Breasted, Maly, Hesterhoff)~~ the normal budget of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago for the year 1925-6 was \$9,800.00, which sustained a teaching department carrying on incidental research; but the Director of the Institute, Professor Breasted,

is one of the most fertile of living scholars. He saw a succession of extraordinary, specific field opportunities, valuable alike as training and research, which the University could not finance out of current income. To finance these activities over the period necessary to their completion called for \$150,000 a year annually for five years. It was neither possible nor desirable for the University to raise \$3,000,000 of endowment for the purpose - not possible, because of other permanent needs; not desirable, because the fund might have caused embarrassment or waste, when once its special purpose was served. Fortunately, Professor Breasted enlisted the interest of Mr. Rockefeller, who is supporting the field operations in question to the extent of \$100,000 a year; and the General Education Board has further supplemented this fund by five year grants amounting annually to \$40,000. If the whole had been capitalized, \$3,000,000 would have been required - an obvious impossibility.

A similar situation exists in the English department, which, under handicaps that are a disgrace to higher education, is endeavoring (1) to prepare a definitive text of Chaucer, and (2) a dictionary of American English - both tasks of first-rate importance. To insure their completion in the life-time of the distinguished scholars engaged upon them, the Chaucer work requires \$35,000 a year for five years, the dictionary \$18,000 a year for perhaps a similar period. To procure current income of \$53,000 yearly for five years, the University cannot undertake to raise \$1,250,000 in endowments.

To give a final illustration - the most eminent authority in Ancient History, Professor Rostovtzeff, now at Yale, requires \$21,000 for three years, to complete excavations at Dura, which have already furnished more material on the history of the Hellenistic period than the world had previously possessed and that promise additional finds of rare value. At the end of the three years, the site will have been exhausted and there may or may not be further opportunity of similar character.

At present universities have no free funds with which to finance undertakings calling for disproportionately large sums over limited periods. If they possessed general endowments, the income would inevitably go into raising salaries; if they had a special fund, it would be impracticable to concentrate a large part on a humanistic enterprise for a definite period; the income would probably be split up so as to favor a considerable number of small enterprises. Meanwhile, a few big achievements in the field would be far more stimulating, do more to lift the level of humanistic culture and to infuse a sense of adventure into a realm that is too apt to sink to mere bookishness.

If projects such as I have in mind have to be financed by the raising of endowment, universities will simply not undertake them. Not only cannot universities raise endowment for these extraordinary undertakings, they should not, for the endowments may not be needed, once the individual ~~fini~~ their tasks or retire from the scene.

The same sort of problem arises in connection with coöperative enterprises undertaken by groups of scholars; one such enterprise may call for a small sum annually over a limited period; the next for a larger sum. These societies cannot raise endowments; perhaps they ought not to be endowed. Yet unless specific sums are obtainable for definite objects, the undertakings must either be abandoned or carried on under conditions that require an unreasonable sacrifice of a few persons, and even so cannot be achieved in a really thoroughgoing fashion. If they must be left to chance, as they now are, the adventurous and experimental side of humanistic study is sacrificed and the field loses what is at the moment its most powerful appeal. As compared with science, its handicaps are still further increased.

In my opinion, therefore, this Board can do much to hearten humanists and to promote sound and far-reaching scholarly objects by doing for others of equal eminence what it has already done for Professor Breasted. We run little

risk in assisting Breasted, Manly and Rostovtzeff. But unquestionably, the moment we leave figures of their stature, difficulties arise; for applications will be made which may or may not be meritorious, respecting which decision will not be easy. A technique for handling them will have to be invented; perhaps a number of applications whose importance remains to be determined will have to be studied before the proper technique is discovered. It may not ^{be} without significance to note that the Carnegie Corporation, the Spelman Memorial and the Rockefeller Foundation (including the International Health Board) have all found it possible and necessary to further special undertakings. For the present, however, I limit myself to the three points: (1) a humanistic program cannot be effectually assisted by the General Education Board, unless grants for large special objects can be made; (2) a limited number of such grants involving the minimum of risk by reason of the eminence of those interested can now be made; (3) further thought is needed in order to find reliable methods of discrimination respecting other applications.

3. Publication

The results of such efforts as I have just discussed must be published; but they can be published, as a rule, only at a loss - certainly in America at this time. Study must therefore be given to the financial problem involved in easing the conditions surrounding the publication of learned works that cannot be issued except at a probable or certain financial loss. I suggest in the first place an investigation of the financial situation of university presses in order to see whether it is possible to secure such coöperation as will be needed to issue and to distribute publications that do not pay.

4. Societies

Indispensable factors in developing interest and coöperation are humanistic societies and associations with their respective journals, proceedings, etc. Up to the present time, these organizations have led poverty stricken lives

*Publication of
relatively minor
parts of research*

with the small dues paid by underpaid scholars; their journals have been gotten out under almost impossible conditions. Some of the best (e.g. the Harvard Studies in English) have given up the ghost; others (e.g. Harvard Classical Studies) are sustained because a devoted scholar, who is fit for other things, annually passes the hat along State Street, to make up a deficit of \$2,000 or somewhat more; occasionally a university press or a university grants a subvention that is just enough to keep alive a journal printing the fewest possible number of pages. Here again is a subject which should be studied so as to get all the facts as a basis for considering what steps, if any, are feasible to promote the activities of learned societies and to assist them in obtaining reasonable facilities for publication.

5. Fellowships and grants

Travel and study abroad are absolutely essential to the humanist. It would be bad enough to confine the training of physicists, mathematicians, and physicians to American universities; but inasmuch as physics, mathematics, and medicine are the same in essence the world over, the thing could be done, though obviously not without sacrifice of inspiration and stimulus. But in the humanities, America will not suffice at all. The languages, the libraries, the galleries, ~~the~~ architecture, the historic sites belong across the water. A merely bookish knowledge of them will not sustain vigorous or productive humanistic activity. Moreover, during their formative period, humanists must get away from America to places where art and literature and scholarship are more at home than they are as yet here. Professor Tenney Frank quotes students at the American Academy in Rome as saying: "I had to get away or surrender." If the academic career were remunerative, young men would readily risk incurring debts in order to study at the sources abroad; older men would have laid by the sums needed to enable them at intervals to refresh themselves. In the absence of a salary scale

which does not justify young men in incurring debts or permit older scholars to lay by a competency, a system of fellowships for younger scholars of promise and a system of grants to older men who deserve and need a renewal of inspiration ought to be created.

In my judgment, all five problems must be solved if humanism is to play its part in the civilizing of the American people. Nor do I believe that we ought to refrain from inquiry and even experimentation because the problems and their solution present certain novel features. The General Education Board is fortunately free to use its wits; it need not be bound by precedents established in other fields, in which problems could be solved or help could be given without resorting to some of the methods which I am inclined to try.

I recommend therefore:

✓ (1) That the General Education Board cooperate with selected institutions in increasing resources and facilities needed for humanistic studies;

2, (2) That the General Education Board consider on their merits projects undertaken by distinguished scholars, and that the officers be authorized to investigate the possibility of dealing with projects whose face value is not obvious;

2, (3) That the officers procure a study of university presses;

✓ (4) That the officers procure a study of learned societies and their publications;

✓ (5) That the officers be authorized to submit to the Board a scheme for fellowships and grants.