

three-hour rigor of afternoon lab. He decided he wasn't getting enough sleep.

On the olive walk he passed a couple of professors and noted with dismay that, with the end of the year approaching, he was feeling warm and forgiving sentiments toward them. Seniors went by him solemnly, unbelievably dressed in suits. He knew they were going in for interviews to get jobs after graduation. In a few weeks they would receive their parchments, take a last look around, and plunge into the ice-water of outside life. Some of them he knew were getting married.

It would seem strange not to have them around in the fall. It seemed strange that way every spring, but in the fall everything seemed to go on all right without them. The Beaver wondered what all the disappearing seniors did in years to come with the thousands of dog-eared lab notebooks like the one under his arm.

As he entered the lab, he was confronted by his roommate, who wanted the five back. Muttering bitterly, he decided to borrow it from the "Y." He had done it before. It certainly was an old story.

—Jim Hendrickson '50

## BOOKS: A challenge to complacency

### CRISIS IN EDUCATION

by Bernard Iddings Bell

Whittlesey House, New York, 230 pp. \$3

Reviewed by L. Winchester Jones  
Dean of Admissions

**T**HE sub-title of Dr. Bell's little book—*A Challenge to American Complacency*—places it in a class with a significant number of other volumes which have appeared in the last ten years, all written by men experienced in the field of education and all intended to warn the layman that his pride in the American school system may not be entirely justified in the light of what is actually being produced.

Most of these books concentrate more or less on one division of the system—primary, secondary, collegiate—and stick pretty close to matters related to pedagogy. Dr. Bell does not so limit himself. In his attempt to get at the fundamental weaknesses he includes a keen if somewhat devastating analysis of the contemporary American, the product of a school and home influence which has failed to teach him any knowledge but facts, any morality other than expediency, any purpose in life except acquiring goods, or any method of self expression except spending in a wild scramble to buy pleasure. Uncertain of himself, fearful in his heart that perhaps the goals he is attempting to reach are not after all shining castles but rather dingy tenements housing more frustration, he covers his fear with boasting and his uncertainty by an attempt to impose his systems on the rest of the world.

#### A matter of balance

Dr. Bell is not concerned with any particular level of education or with any particular system. He is interested in training men and women to meet the problems and the challenges of today, and he believes that such training, at whatever level and by whatever system, must contain certain basic disciplines *in balance*. "An education involves developing and increasing expertness in . . . science, appreciation of the nature of things, creative art, social relationships, religion . . . Omit any one or leave it in an embryonic state, and the pupil becomes quite literally unbalanced."

Nor is it enough that these things be offered. They must be learned, and they cannot be learned without

effort, without discipline, by letting the pupil play at what he likes on the theory that he will absorb more easily when the process is painless. Without effort there is little absorption, only a superficial wetting that soon dries off. "The business of the school, the home, and the church is to feed the lambs, not to amuse the young goats."

Chapter 10, Education and Stateism, is worth reading for itself. Few laymen are aware of how very close we are to Federally dictated educational policies. That education can be used to keep one class or group in power has been all too clearly illustrated by the experiences of the past twenty-five years in Europe. Never in history has our school system needed so much money to do its job properly. Only the Federal government can supply the sums that are needed. In the long run the man who pays the piper calls the tune. Only by awareness and vigilance on the part of each one of us can American education avoid becoming, as Dr. Bell says, an instrument for "keeping the general public quiet and tractable."

There is much in this book with which you will not agree. No thoughtful man ever agreed entirely with the words of another. There is much that is unpleasant and shocking to those who want to believe that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. But to the intelligent who know that the pattern of the future is set by habits of the present, and to the parents who love their children enough not to trust blindly to the effectiveness of a system about which they are largely ignorant, this book will be indeed a challenge to complacency and perhaps, in a few instances, a stimulus to action.

