

The Reorganization of Our Colleges

THE publication two years ago of "Individual Training in Our Colleges," by Clarence F. Birdseye, created a sensation in college circles because of its frank exposure of the demoralized condition of undergraduate life, due to lack of attention to the real needs of the student. Wherever the book was discussed the justice of the arraignment, in some degree at least, was admitted, but the discussions generally ended with the question, "But if it is so, what are you going to do about it?" This question Mr. Birdseye answers more fully in his new book, *The Reorganization of Our Colleges*.* Here he subjects the college to the test of the business man—the test of efficiency. Does the college accomplish, economically and satisfactorily, its own professed objects? Is it turning out men of scholarly ideals, sound bodies and good morals, fit to become citizens and fathers of families? And what proportion of the material it receives goes to the waste-heap during the process?

Our universities have grown, like our industrial plants, into immense corporations, handling millions of dollars, and, what is more valuable, thousands of lives. Yet, unlike our industrial corpo-

*THE REORGANIZATION OF OUR COLLEGES. By Clarence F. Birdseye. New York: The Baker & Taylor Co. \$1.75.

rations, they have developed no administrative organs capable of adequately handling effectively the heterogeneous aggregations. The professors are robbed of their time in order to do executive business, which usually they dislike and are often unfitted by temperament and training to do well. Any one who has tried to collect university statistics, even of such simple points as the number of students in a certain year or the expenditures for certain purposes, will realize how chaotic and undeveloped is the mere matter of recording. As for finding out what classes are being well taught, and why some students fail, and what becomes of them, not even the president, who is supposed to know everything, knows that.

Mr. Birdseye comes to this startling conclusion:

"After a pretty careful examination of college methods, and from a practical knowledge of the growth of accounting and business administration for thirty years, I am sure that, if our colleges would formulate and apply new units of value and up to date administration and accounting methods, they would quadruple in ten years their net results in wholesome training for citizenship, without a dollar's increase in endowment, and to the lasting satisfaction of all concerned, and at a relatively great saving in cost."

The average college man will probably not be ready to admit this. That is why the author is going to do what he can toward demonstrating it. For Mr. Birdseye does not write books for the fun of it, altho he has a shelf-full to his name. He means business, and he has organized a company for the purpose of investigating the real conditions prevailing in the classroom and the student home, and of applying such measures for the reform of their evils as observation and experience may direct.