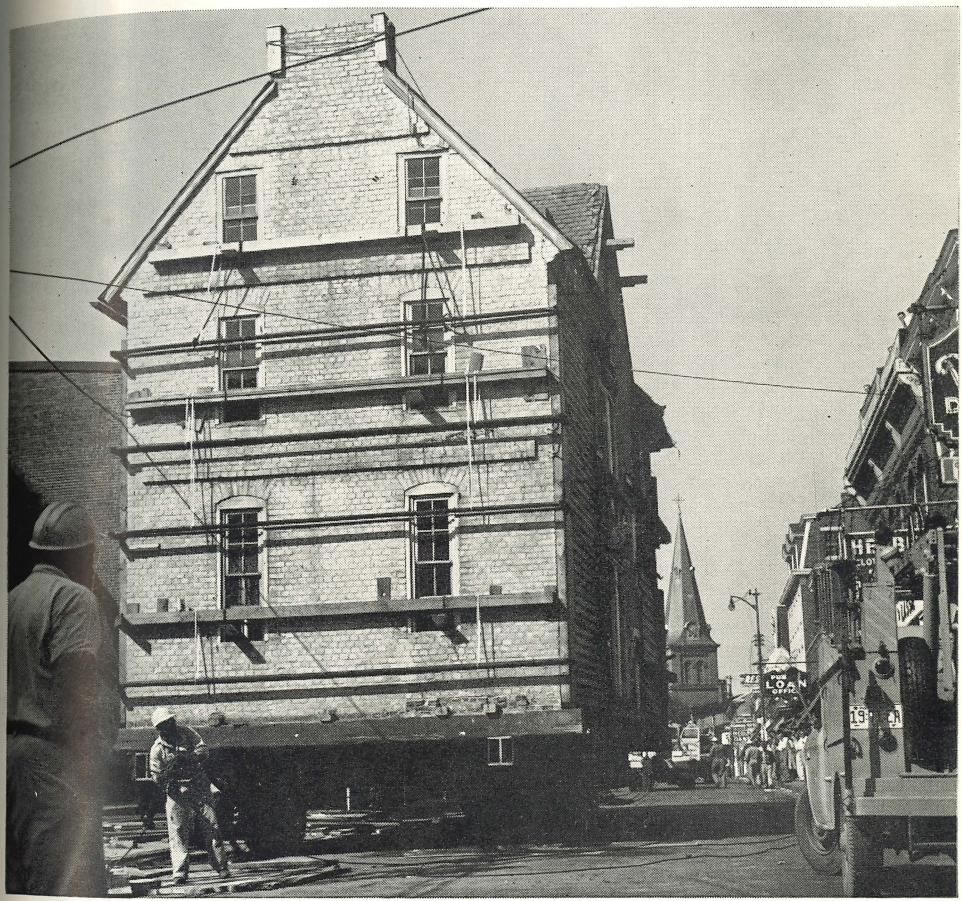
VOLUME VIII No. 1

Bulletin of

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE
IN ANNAPOLIS



Carroll-Davis House

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND
JANUARY, 1956

Founded as King William's School, 1696. Chartered as St. John's College, 1785

CARROLL-DAVIS HOUSE

The Carroll-Davis House, colonial birthplace of Charles Carroll the barrister, arrived at its new location on the St. John's campus in the early fall. Historic Annapolis Inc., an organization for the preservation of historic landmarks in Annapolis, gave the house to the College and raised the $20,000 necessary for moving it.

The move was accomplished in two sections, and the house sustained no damage in the six-block trip from the business section of Annapolis where it had stood for over two hundred years at the corner of Conduit and Main Streets.

Workmen are now busy digging a cellar and building a new foundation under the house. No decision has been reached on its ultimate use. One suggestion has been to turn it into a faculty club with offices for faculty members on the second and third floors.

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IMPRESSIONS OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

President Weigle spent twelve weeks in India last summer on a lectureship for the Department of State. The following excerpts are taken from his report dealing with higher education in India.

Indian higher education appears to be severely hampered by the strait jacket of university affiliation. There are a not inconsiderable number of able college principals who find their hands almost completely tied by the necessity of conforming to university requirements. These determine the eligibility of their graduates for a university degree. This in turn decides the eligibility of the graduate for a government position. The inertia of the system seems to stifle or dull individual initiative on the part of the able principal or faculty member, who finds that it is simpler to go on teaching in the established pattern. I can see no real vitality for the future unless some way can be discovered to breach the affiliation system and to encourage a degree of educational experimentation and cross-fertilization.

In Madras, for example, a university official was complaining about the volume of work in his office. "You know," he said, "we now have 120 colleges and departments as constituent parts of or affiliated with Madras University, and over 50,000 students!" With perhaps a pardonable touch of malice, I countered with a query, "How soon are you going to give some of those colleges their independence?" His horror at the suggestion was indicative of the thinking of many university educators who fear for the loss of "standards." They fail to recognize that standards are now set for the entire university at a level consonant with the achievements of the poorest of the constituent colleges. The bureaucratic machinery of university regimentation seems to be turning out a product which leaves much to be desired. Students are mass produced, rote trained, and often immature in their thinking. As one Indian editor expressed it to me, Indian education has failed to turn out a non-conformist and an original thinker.

The root of the trouble would appear to be the lecture-examination system, still a problem in many parts of the United States. I attended several B.A. and M.A. lectures during my visits to Indian colleges and universities. On one occasion I listened to an excellent presentation of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. On another I heard the most painstaking and detailed explanation as to how to count up individual cases in the preparation of a statistical curve. One lecturer dictated to his students. As if feeling the need for self- justification, he confided to me afterward, "You know, I never permit any interruptions during class, for they disturb my train of thought." Students and their notebooks are inseparable, and apparently these notes are then "mugged up" in preparation for the hurdles of the examinations. Daily assignments are evidently quite rare, most of the student's real work being crowded into the month preceding the examination.

Universally Indian educators recited their complaint of numbers. With few exceptions, Indian colleges are overcrowded, thus increasing the size of lecture classes and making almost impossible the more intimate discussion type of class exercise. It was truly astounding to hear educator after educator state as a self-evident fact that his college could not deny admission to prospective students! As one of them said to me, "They have to go somewhere, and we must make room for them." Perhaps part of the problem is the close relationship between the university degree and subsequent employment. Perhaps part of it is attributable to the paucity of technical education and training schools, which would otherwise attract large numbers of students. But part of the difficulty in which the educators find themselves must be ascribed to their own lack of fortitude in adhering to a policy of limited enrollment which will assure a higher standard of instruction.

The lecture schedule of both teacher and student is heavy, as judged by American practice. Most students undergo five or six hours of lectures each day, thus covering as many as

eight subjects simultaneously. If it were possible to reduce the frequency of lectures, as well as the number of subjects studied, the student might well be expected to do outside preparation in some areas which would thus not necessarily require lecture coverage. This would also result in relieving overworked college teachers. It might even create some time which could be used for smaller discussion classes, at least on an occasional basis.

The Language Question

There is no question but that Indian students work under a severe handicap, particularly in oral work, since colleges use a foreign language as a medium of instruction. I must say, however, that with few exceptions I experienced no difficulty in making myself understood, or in understanding questioners. There was a wide range in linguistic ability on the part of the students, a considerable advantage accruing to those who had had the opportunity of studying English under a foreign teacher to whom the language was native. I was interested to learn that interest in English has begun to reassert itself after a period of temporary eclipse following Independence. Students have apparently come to realize the usefulness of English for some time to come.

Student Indiscipline

Upon two occasions I was able to observe at first-hand developments in major cases of student indiscipline. It is a real problem which causes considerable concern to Indian educators. The roots of the problem go back to the days of British dominion when student agitation and non-compliance were encouraged by the Congress Party as part of its drive to gain independence. Now, of course, this weapon has come back against the Congress Party as the party in power. But there are other roots as well. Many teachers have told me of the lack of interest of parents in their children. Most parents, they say, seem primarily interested in getting their children away from home and into a school just as soon as possible. They apparently find it difficult to discipline

children at home and leave the task up to the school authorities.

Another clue I found in a conversation with a young Sikh student. He complained that his teachers were dull and that they had no contact with the students. He said that there was no chance to ask questions in class so that political activity provided a welcome outlet. Without formal assignments, he said, students have nothing to do outside of class hours but "drift about." It was his assertion that if students got to know their teachers better, they would respect them and strikes and similar activities would become distasteful to them. In support of this young student's opinion, I must cite the case of the students at the Indian Institute of Technology at Kharagpur. This institution, almost purely residential, has one of the highest *esprit de corps* of any institution that I visited in India. Enrollment is limited and classes small. Teachers and students seem to have developed a fine relationship. When most college students all over India went on strike in protest against the killing of Sathyagrahis at Goa in mid-August, the I. I. T. students met, discussed the issue, decided to continue classes, fasted for the day, and gave the money they saved to the Goa relief fund.

Questions were put to me many times by student and faculty audiences as to whether American undergraduates were free to participate in political activity. My answer was that they were quite free to but as a matter of fact rarely did, except at times of national elections. I usually stated that we considered society to have given students this four-year period of leisure to enable them to develop their minds and selves to the point of becoming useful citizens. Premature indulgence in the political sphere would add to the prevailing confusion in the world and would misuse the precious time at the student's disposal. Many responsible college principals are concerned with this problem and see that it is related to the role of the college in character building and that it depends to a great extent upon developing closer relations between students and teachers.

The St. John's Program of liberal education usually seemed to capture the imagination of both professor and student alike, as I visited the various college campuses. The discussion method of instruction appealed to the students in particular. Mention of deemphasis of examinations even brought applause in one or two audiences. There was, of course, skepticism as to whether the graduate was prepared to do anything constructive in life, a skepticism no different from that which the College faces in the United States. Many principals and professors who had the task of presiding at my lectures took pains to point out how such a program could not be applicable to India from the standpoint of numbers. They were nonetheless glad to have it presented to their students and spoke of it as a challenging example of educational experimentation. Many expressed the hope that certain features of the program might be adapted for use in Indian institutions.

Certain student questions following my talks had to do with matters common to most American colleges. There was confusion about the distinction between a college and a university in the United States. It usually surprised both faculty and students that American boys and girls normally entered college at age 18 and completed their B.A. or B.S. work at age 22. This is in sharp contrast to the Indian practice of hastening education so that many individuals hold their master's degree by age 21. Other subjects which called forth questions were co-education, scholarship and student employment opportunities, extracurricular activities, entrance requirements for college, counselling services for students, and graduate placement bureaus. The color question was inevitably raised. Students were usually satisfied to learn that St. John's, a southern institution, had accepted Negro students on its own initiative some years ago.

In a number of cases there were excellent discussions of liberal and general education and of the St. John's program.

Both faculty and students asked about "results" at St. John's, and I found myself in the pleasant position of defending the education of the whole man and the development of his mind and spirit, as over against a concern with the more material side of job opportunities and training, as expressed by many of my questioners. As one student put it, "Has general education a material aspect which appears to be the main problem of human life in the modern age?" Or, "Do the students of your college not learn less of many things, whereas nowadays much of a particular thing is essential?" The issue of when to begin specialization prompted sharp debate, and I found many strong advocates for the St. John's philosophy of training a mind rather than imparting subject matters. Other questions indicated a concern for broadening the St. John's program to include Eastern books as well as the Western tradition. This I accepted as a valid criticism. One student suggested that "the basic ideas of the great religions of the world should be included in the curriculum during the four years of college in order to improve international understanding."

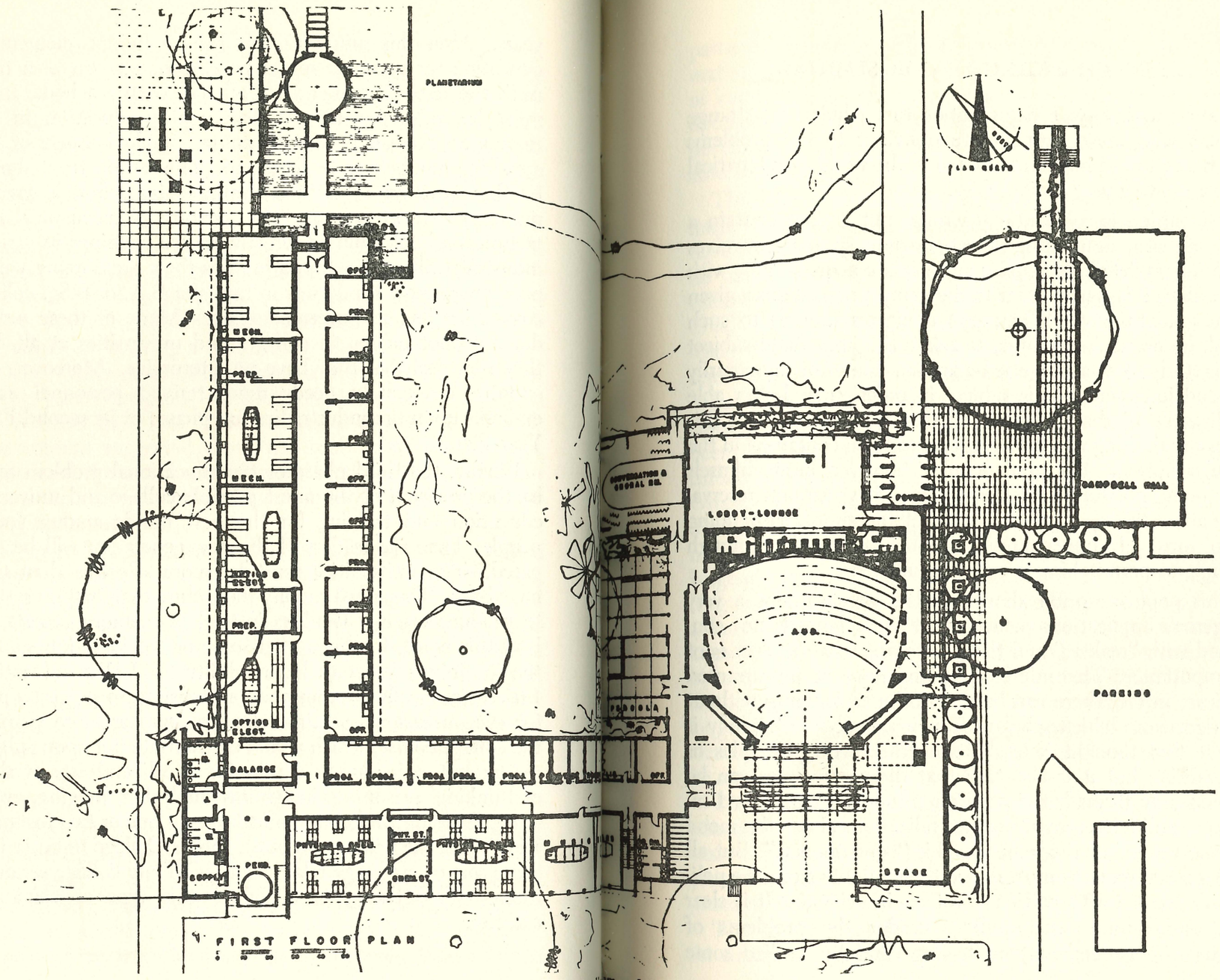
In general it appears to me that modification of the existing pattern of higher education in India is a formidable and almost Herculean task. The concept of decentralization and local control of education seems alien to Indian thought. As one educator expressed it, such decentralization "would make for greater confusion." Since curriculum change must run the gauntlet of ministry and university officials, it will be slow in coming. Vested interests are indeed powerful in university circles.

General Summary

By way of summary, it seems to me that India must approach the vast problem of education at three levels. First, if any success is to be achieved among the masses, particularly in rural areas, the undertaking initially must be modest in its scope. It would appear best to attempt basic education, perhaps along the Gandhi pattern, for only two or three

years. After this minimum has been achieved, elementary education for everyone might be extended a year at a time until the desired standard for all had been reached. India must be satisfied with less than quality education in the rural areas for some time to come, simply because of the appalling numbers to be educated. The second front should be the provision of technical training for infinitely greater numbers than at present. The creation of mechanical and technical schools pointed directly toward openings in various industries will provide opportunities for a great many young people who now think only in terms of B.A. or B.Sc. college courses leading to government jobs. Many of these individuals do not belong in colleges and universities at all, but they now feel that they have no alternative. Moreover, the country desperately needs more trained personnel as it embarks upon the industrialization phases of its second Five-Year Plan.

Finally, the third phase of the educational problem must be the provision of the finest possible college and university education and training for the best minds among young people. Here the leaders of the new generation will be prepared. The universities must be more selective than they have been. They must modify the lecture-examination system to produce original thinkers instead of memory experts. It is at this point, I believe, that some of the ideas inherent in the St. John's Program have validity for Indian education. I tried specifically on a number of occasions to suggest a plan for even occasional seminars through one or more years of the college course, which would concentrate not upon subject matter but rather upon developing the liberal arts or skills of thinking, reasoning, imagining, analyzing, judging, evaluating, deciding, and communicating. In one or two instances I indicated the willingness of St. John's College to enter into some sort of exchange relationship with any college seriously interested in trying to introduce this type of classroom exercise.



Plan of Proposed Auditorium and Science Building

Neutra and Alexander, Architects

THE CHANGING SENIOR SEMINAR

Some people have a vague notion that scholars are strange persons who muse through life oblivious to the problems which beset most men and blinded to the world by a fanatical dedication to a very limited field.

The notion is substantially wrong; but it does contain a germ of truth. Scholarship, most generally speaking, involves attention to detail. It implies an intimate acquaintance with particulars; it is concerned with the many ramifications a given subject might have. When one dedicates himself to such a task he ceases, for a time, to relate the immediate subject of his study to whatever else he knows. He must temporarily suspend judgment of his subject in order to be better able to discover all that it is and all that it involves. It is this necessary limiting which is the germ of truth contained in the popular notion. The good scholar, however, limits himself knowingly, not forgetting that he may have certain reservations about the meaning of his subject, but simply suspending them until his understanding of his subject is thorough enough to permit him to make a judgment.

This popular notion about scholars also contains a very dangerous implication—namely, that the scholar is not concerned with "reality," and that, therefore, what he does is of no importance. That inference is dangerous and unwarranted because, in fact there can be no continued learning without the rigor from which scholarship is inseparable. Certainly it is true that thought is finally concerned with principles or generalities; but it is also true that those principles can be learned only through the particulars they are manifested in. Thus, a politician may make generalizations about the mood of "the voters" or the temper of his "constituency." But all such general remarks must derive their validity from the politician's contact with particular voters—individuals. It is clear that one cannot successfully consider the problems of language in general without having carefully studied some

particular language. The only way to begin learning about mathematics—the importance of it in relation to other bodies of knowledge, its place in our lives—is to perform its various operations, to study the mathematical systems that have been developed. Once one has mastered the particulars, one is able to generalize.

Thus it is that a student must first deal with the subject itself, must learn what its assumptions are and how they are developed. Then, taking the larger view, he may ask what he has learned; he is ready to judge and generalize. This interplay between the particular and the general is essential to all of human thought and activity and learning and to the study of the liberal arts; and it underlies the changes in the seminar program that were recently instituted at St. John's.

Since its initiation in 1937, the program has undergone constant re-examination and frequent revision. There have been, for example, certain major changes in the language tutorials. Until two years ago three languages were studied: Greek, German and French. Latin was included prior to that. Then, two years ago, the sophomore year was revised to give more time to the study of English grammar. The aim of the language tutorial is to make one aware of the problems of language in general and of one's own language in particular; a knowledge of grammar is prerequisite. This elementary knowledge of the structure of one's language can and should be acquired at a pre-college level, but too often it is not. Rather than allow students to proceed with the study of language without a reasonable knowledge of its elementary structure—which would be self-defeating—the program had to be altered.

This situation, requiring that current defects in secondary education be remedied at the college level, is an external reason for changes in the program: there are other, internal, reasons more directly pertinent to the aims and means of the progam itself.

The list of great books is subject to occasional revision. At times one book is replaced by another, not because the

first is less important or less "great," but because the second promises some greater advantage in use. It may serve some better purpose in the context of current readings.

Obviously, not every treatment of every problem that concerns man can be considered in four years. It is necessary that the program accept the limitations of time and of students' capacities and avoid a scattering of energies; if the program sought to deal with everything, students might grasp nothing clearly. Thus the point of the college endeavor is to supply a well-disciplined beginning.

The seminar program, briefly, is this: Seminars meet twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, for a scheduled two hours (though this often stretches into two and a half or three hours). Fifteen to twenty-five students participate, and two or three tutors are present. Assigned texts are discussed; or as sometimes happens, the texts simply provide a take-off point for discussion. Opinions which are advanced must be reasonably supported. This is the most general outline of the seminar as it has been and as it remains for freshmen, sophomores and juniors.

But this year brought a change in the senior seminars. On Monday evening the entire seminar meets as usual and discusses the assigned text. On Thursday, however, the seminar divides into two or three separate tutorials. These tutorials make close analyses of texts which are related to, and which clarify, the book being read by the seminar as a whole. Each tutorial is assigned a different reading and, when the students next meet as a seminar, it is expected that they will have a better understanding of the original seminar reading because of the greater measure of scholarship possible in the tutorials.

In each of the tutorials, one student presents a written summary of the particular work being studied by his tutorial. This summary is a brief condensation of the work, using paraphrase where necessary. It should explain important terms and outline the steps of the main arguments. The students of the tutorial read the summary and then discuss

it closely, attempting to relate the new material to the work done in the preceding seminar.

The way this works can be made clear by an example. The assignment for the first seminar this year was Hegel's introduction of his *Philosophy of History*. Because this book is particularly difficult, when the seminar ended many things remained unclear. Enough had been understood, however, to indicate certain areas of ignorance. It was decided to explore three other works; the preface to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which elaborates his understanding of existence; parts of the same author's *Science of Logic* which discuss the thinking processes—how they operate, their limitations and scope; and a section of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* which deals with the nature of thought and which is reinterpreted by Hegel. On the following Monday the entire seminar was assigned more reading in *The Philosophy of History* and the members came prepared to supplement the discussion with the results of their several particular studies. In still later tutorials, two other authors were read who use many of Hegel's fundamental assumptions but apply them in very different ways.

This system clearly places more responsibility on the individual student than formerly. Those responsible for the summary in the tutorial must come prepared to discuss particularly difficult passages. They should be able, when possible, to give simple examples of what the author is saying, and generally to indicate the direction of the discussion and the structure of the argument. The other students are, of course, free to read the assignment as carefully as they like. But that each student is, in turn, made formally responsible for grasping and relating the essentials of a book is at the heart of the experiment.

By means of this system, it is expected that the student will further develop his abilities in scholarship. He has learned the importance of regular and systematic application to work in his three years of tutorials; he has become somewhat proficient in logical thought and exposition; he has had a

glimpse of the wealth of thought and experience and genius of three years of seminar readings: in the fourth year his liberal education continues and, in addition, he is exposed to the rigors of scholarship, rigors which are essential to learning.

B.S., 1956

REPORT ON ADULT EDUCATION

Last summer Mr. Kieffer and Mr. McGrath conducted the Seminar-in-Europe. Thirty persons made up the party in addition to the leaders and Mrs. Kieffer. They came from many parts of the country: New York, Washington, Florida, Tennessee, California and Vancouver. They ranged in age from 17 to 78. There were ten men, a higher proportion than the previous two years. The party sailed June 23rd on the *Cristoforo Colombo* and landed in Naples July 1st. Seminars were held at sea on the *Odyssey* and the *Euthyphro*. In Rome Virgil's *Aeneid* and St. Augustine's *Confessions* were discussed; in Florence, Dante's *Divine Comedy;* in Venice Machiavelli's *The Prince;* in Salzburg and Innsbruck the *Gospel of St. Mark;* in Paris, Rosseau's *Social Contract* and Racine's *Phedre;* in England Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and two plays of Shakespeare's.

Beside the seminars there was constant sight-seeing in all the six countries visited. Good weather blessed the tour for the whole eight weeks. The party sailed for home from Southampton for the States on the *Castel Felice*.

Meanwhile, back in McDowell Hall, Mr. Kramer and Mr. Darkey were conducting a seminar reading books on Modern Political events and theories. The enrollment was large and every meeting well attended.

This fall our program opened with a seminar that included reading again on political subjects. The unusual feature was that many books of the *Bible* were on the list and were read for their political significance. The seminar was led by Mr. Kieffer and Mr. Darkey.

The Philosophy of War seminar, conducted by Professors Wheeler and Fredland of the U. S. Naval Academy, continues. This year it is devoted to the study of the Civil War.

The Short-Story writing class was given again this term after a hiatus of several years and was led by Mr. Tolbert.

Several programs for teachers were offered, but not given because of insufficient enrollment. It is hoped that with more publicity, teachers may be brought into contact with St. John's through Adult Education.

Mr. Brown conducted his seminar in Baltimore for the ninth year.

The other out-of-Annapolis seminars were not given, except for one in San Francisco. St. John's is finding the competition with the Great Books Foundation and the Ford Foundation increasingly active.

JOHN S. KIEFFER,
Director of Adult Education

FOUNDATION EXTENDS MATCHING OFFER

President Weigle announces that the Old Dominion Foundation of New York City has agreed to extend for a further five-year period its generous offer to match any sums contributed to St. John's College for endowment purposes. The trustees at the Foundation have also increased the total amount which they are willing to match to $2,300,000.

RECENT GRANTS TO COLLEGE

St. John's College will receive a grant of approximately $135,000 from the Ford Foundation according to the announcement made the week before Christmas by Mr. William McPeak, Vice-President of the Foundation. Half of this sum will be paid by June 30, 1956 and the balance a year later. It is planned that these funds will be used to endow more adequate faculty salaries at the College.

Mr. Weigle also reports that the College has been successful in raising the necessary funds to match the conditional grant

of $250,000 from the State of Maryland toward the new science building. In all probability an additional $500,000 must be raised to complete the structure. Meanwhile, full working drawings and specifications are being prepared by the architect in the hope that construction can commence this summer.

TEACHING INTERNSHIPS

New teaching interns appointed for 1955-56 are Seth G. Benardete, a graduate of the University of Chicago, and Thomas K. Simpson, who is a St. John's graduate of the Class of 1950.

Mr. Benardete obtained his bachelors's, master's and doctor's degree from the University of Chicago during the 1949-55 period. As the winner of the Ryerson Fellowship of the University of Chicago, he spent 1952-53 in Greece. There he worked on his doctoral thesis, translated two plays of Aeschylus, and went to Mount Athos where he made a collation of one of the Aeschylus manuscripts.

As the holder of a Ford Fellowship in 1953-54, he lived principally in Florence where he continued to work on his thesis and make a collation of another Aeschylus manuscript. In both Greece and Italy he traveled widely. He has also visited Turkey.

Mr. Simpson was graduated *magna cum laude* from St. John's College in 1950. He obtained his master's degree from Wesleyan University in Connecticut in 1955. From 1950 to 1953 he taught at the American University at Cairo, Egypt.

The teaching internship program at St. John's College is subsidized by the Fund for the Advancement of Education established by the Ford Foundation. Under the program young men and women who are preparing themselves for a teaching career or who desire to enlarge their teaching experience have an opportunity to teach and to learn within the St. John's curriculum. Appointments are for a single year. Applications are now being received for 1956-57.

GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

St. John's College is a non-sectarian, independent liberal arts college deriving its income from student fees, from a limited appropriation by the Maryland General Assembly, from the gifts of its friends and alumni and from permanent endowment funds. These funds now exceed $1,500,000 but must be quadrupled to assure the financial stability of the College.

Planning for the future has been based upon the conviction that the College enrollment should not exceed 300 students. This will preserve the present close relationship between faculty and students. To provide adequate physical facilities for a student body of this size, new buildings will be required as well as renovations to existing structures.

The College invites gifts and bequests to its current budget, to its building program, and to its permanent endowment funds. Inquiries may be addressed to the President or the Treasurer. Bequests may be made in a form similar to the following:

> "I hereby give and bequeath to the Visitors and Governors of St. John's College in the State of Maryland, an educational corporation existing by Charter of the General Assembly of the State of Maryland and situated in Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, in said State, the sum of ..... dollars."

If bequests are made for specific purposes, such can be fully stated. Attention is invited to the fact that Federal and State income tax deductions resulting from such gifts may mean a cost to the donor of only a fraction of the value of the gift to the College.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