

College uneducation by jorge bocobo



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Dr. Jorge Bocobo was born in Gerona, Tarlac in 1896. He studied in the private and public schools of his town during the Spanish regime, and he resumed his education during the early part of the America occupation. In 1903, he was among the first group of government pensionados sent to the United States on a scholarship. Dean Bocobo took up law at Indiana University and returned to the Philippines after completing his studies. He began working as a law clerk in the executive bureau of the government. Later, he was drafted into the newly founded College of Law where he taught Civil Law He is the principal author of the Civil Code of the Philippines. He was appointed as President of the University of the Philippines in 1935 and later resigned to become Secretary of Public Instruction under President Quezon A prolific writer, President Bocobo wrote books of general interest as well as articles on civil law. The following speech was delivered to the students of the University of the Philippines in September of 1921.

I wish to speak on “ College Uneducation”. Is it possible that our college education may ” uneducated rather than educate? I answer “ yes”. It is a paradox but nonetheless the truth, the grim, unmerciful truth. We believe in higher education we should not be in the University. At the same time, college education – like all other human devices for human betterment may build or destroy, lead, or mislead. My ten years of humble service in the University of the Philippines has afforded me an opportunity to watch the current of ideals and practices of our student body. In some aspects of higher education, most of our students have measured up to their high responsibilities. But in other features alas, vital ones! The thoughts and actions of many of them tend to stunt the mind dry up the heart, and

squelch the soul. These students are being uneducated in college I shall briefly discuss three ways in which many of our students are getting a college uneducation, for which they pay tuition fees and make unnumbered sacrifices.

Book Worship

In the first place, there is the all but delirious worship of the printed page. “What does the book say?” is by all odds, the most important question in the student’s mind whenever he is faced with any problem calling for his own reasoning. By the takers, many students feel a sort of frenzy for facts till these become as huge as the mountains and the mind is crushed under them. Those students think of nothing but how to accumulate data, hence, their capacity for clear powerful thinking is paralyzed. How pathetic to hear them and discuss! Because they lack the native vitality of unhampered reason, their discourse smacks of cant and sophistry rather than of healthy reasoning and straight thinking. It is then that many of our students surrender their individuality to the textbooks and lose their birthright – which is to think for themselves. And when they attempt to form their own judgment they become pedantic. Unless a student develops the habit of independent and sound reasoning, his college education is a solemn sham. Compare these college students with Juan de la Cruz in the barrios. His mind is free from the overwhelming, unjust weight of unassimilated book knowledge. How penetrating his perception, how unnerve his judgment, how solid his common sense!

Professional Philistinism

The second manner of college education that I want to speak of is this, most students make professional efficiency the be all and end all of college education. They have set their hearts upon becoming highly trained lawyer, doctors, engineers, teachers, and agriculturist. I shall not stop to inquire into the question of how much blame should be laid at the door of the faculties of the University for this pernicious drift toward undue and excessive specialization. That such a tendency exist is undeniable, but we never pursue to count the cost. We are all of one mind. I believe that college education is nothing unless it widens a man's vision, broadens his sympathies and leads him to higher thinking and deep feeling. Yet how can we expect all this result from a state of affairs which reduces a law student to a code a prospective doctor to a prescriptions and a would-be an engineer to a mathematical formulas? How many students in our in our professional colleges are doing any systematic reading in literature. May we not, indeed serious whether this fetish of specialization does not smother the inspiring sense of beauty and ennobling love of finer things that our students have it in them to unfold into full blown-magnificence.

The Jading Dullness of Modern Life

“ A thing of beauty is a joy forever”, says Keats. But we know that beauty is a matter of taste, and unless we develop in us a proper appreciation of what is beautiful and sublime, everything around us is tedious and common place. We rise early and go out into the morning, but our spirit is unresponsive to the hopeful quietude and the dew-chastened sweetness of dawn. At night, we behold the myriad stars but they are just so many bright specks, their soft fires do not soothe our troubled hearts and we do not experience that

awesome, soul-stirring, fascination of the immense ties of God Universe. We are bathed in the silver sheen of the moon and yet feel not the beatitude of the moment we gaze upon a vista of high mountains, but their silent strength has no appeal for us. We read some undying verses, still, their vibrant cadence does not thrill us, and their transcendent thought is to us like a vision that vanishes. We look at a masterpiece of the chisel with its eternal gracefulness of lines and properties, yet to us is no more than mere human likeness. Tell me, is such a life worth coming to college for? Yet, my friends, the over specialization which many students with zeal and devotion is bound to result in such unfeeling, dry as dust-existence. I may say in passing that the education of the older generations is in this respect far superior to ours. Our older countrymen may with reason that the new education does not lawfully cultivate the heart as the old education did.

Misguided Zeal

Lastly, this selfsame rage for highly specialized training with a view to distinguished professional success, be clouds our vision of the broader perspective of life. Our philosophy of life is in danger of becoming narrow and mean because we are habituated to think almost wholly in terms of material well being. Of course we must be practical? We cannot adequately answer this tremendous question unless we thoughtfully develop a proper sense of values and thus learn to separate the dross from the gold, the chaff from the grain of life. The time to do this task is not after but before college graduation, for when all is said and done, the sum and substance of higher education is the individual formulation of what life is for, with special training in some advanced line of human learning in order that such a life formula

may be executed with the utmost effectiveness. But how can we lay down the terms of our philosophy of life if even-one of our thoughts is absorbed by the daily assignment, the outside reading, and the laboratory experiment and when we continuously devour lectures and notes.

“ Uneducated” Juan dela Cruz as Teacher

Here, again, many of our students should sit at the feet of meagerly educated Juan de la Cruz and learn wisdom. Ah! He is often called ignorant, but he is the wisest of the wise, for he has unrelated the mysteries of life. He is the happiness of the man who known the why's of human existence. Unassuming, Juan de la Cruz cherishes no “ vaulting ambition which overleap itself His simple arid hardly virtues put to shame the studied and complex rules of conduct of highly educated man and women. In adversity, his stoicism is beyond encomium. His love of home, so quite faithful is the firm foundation of our social structure And his patriotism has been tested and found true. Can our students learn from Juan de la Cruz or does their college education unfit them to become his pupils? In conclusion, I shall say I have observed among many of our students certain alarming signs of college uneducation, and some of these are (1) lack of independent judgment as well as love of pedantry, because of the worship of the printed page and the feverish accumulation of undigested data. (2) the deadening of the delicate sense of the beautiful and the sublime on account of over specialization and (3) neglect of the formulation of a sound philosophy of life as a result of excessive emphasis on professional training.