

BOOK REVIEWS

By SALLY KNOX
THE AWAKENING COLLEGE,
by Clarence Cook Little, W. W.
Norton, publishers.
"Sleep once won is easy, and
waking is difficult. But there is
work to be done, new worlds to
be built. An eager courageous
youth awaits. These inspiring
words, so characteristic of their
author, show that Dr. Little, far
from being disheartened by his
very disillusioning experience at
the University of Michigan, still
possesses his indomitable optimism
of youth."
A book by Dr. Little is bound

to have interest for anyone con-
cerned about present-day educa-
tion. For Michigan alumni it must
have special interest, for in spite
of his statement in the preface
"No one institution or individual
within an institution is aimed at
and in spite of the fact that the
name of Michigan is never men-
tioned in the book more definitely
than an "institution" or a "large
state university," it is clear to
those familiar with the history of
Michigan during the four years of
his presidency that the evils which
he deplores at American colleges
were the same rocks which stood

in his path at Michigan. Natural-
ly, Dr. Little, being a scientist,
does not make a statement unless
it is backed up by more than one
example; but his experience at
Michigan is richly drawn on.

For one who was a student in
the university during these of his
four years, who was graduated, as
it were, with him, and who never
lost faith in his sincerity, his es-
sential rightness, and above all
his trust in youth, the book is of
supreme interest. Dr. Little is
possessed of a strong personality,
which affects those with whom he
comes in contact quite positively.
One likes him or dislikes him in-
tensely. His book is a transparent
expression of his personality, and
all reviews must be partisan,
whether frankly so or no. Plainly
this review is the work of an ad-
mirer.

It is apparent to all that Dr. Little
thinks clearly and recom-
mends concretely and frankly. He
does not say "Something is wrong
and something ought to be done
about it," he says instead "This
is wrong; and that ought to be
done." He has not diplomacy,
and does not believe in it. Di-
plomacy he believes, belongs to
age; frankness belongs to youth.
Moreover, he is a talker, and
when placed in a position of
power, he acts. He trusts himself.
From these qualities, most of his
difficulties have arisen. People are
inherently lazy; they do not like
to be told their way of thinking is
wrong because it changes their
opinions requires energy. They
would rather be soothed and flattered.
Even more they like to be
being told their way of acting is
wrong, because to change this re-
quires more energy. A thinker is
tolerated; but a doer is as quickly
suppressed as possible. Dr. Little
thought, he recommended, he
acted, he was retarded. But he still
is convinced of his correctness,
and he is trying, by the more
gentle means left to him—namely,
propaganda—to make our
universities more truly places of
freedom, learning, and character-
building.

Dr. Little's first topic in "The
Awakening College" is college en-
trance requirements. Here he
points out that the old system of
written examinations is character-
ized by impersonality and gives
only a moderately satisfactory
measure of the amount of infor-
mation in a restricted field pos-
sessed by the candidate. The
newer developments, he says, are
proceeding with tests of general
and special mental aptitude on the
one hand, and towards study and
evaluation of the pupil's emotion-
al maturity, stability and normal-
cy on the other. The two avenues
of progress," he continues "have
in common an increased interest
in the individual student as a
character and as a personality."

The student who is thus select-
ed, he believes, deserves to be
treated throughout his college
career, as an individual. The
author advocates the entering of
all freshmen a week in advance of
the upperclassmen, during which
period they may become oriented

in their new environment, ac-
quainted with their classmates,
and afford a first-hand means of
study. This plan, known as Fresh-
man Week, has proved out with
great success at Michigan and
other colleges, and is now an ac-
quired part of the institution.
Years, he says "should be employ-
ed as a period of academic elastic-
ity, of broadening adjustment,
intellectual curiosity and inter-
est." At the end of the first two
years, the student should be
subjected to the test of the
student's fitness for academic
advancement. Those who have
come to college for non-studious
purposes would at this time be
given a certificate of work done
and honorable dismissal; and
others would enter upon a period
of professional or intellectual
training. This plan, known as the
University College, was opposed
by the faculty, passed by the re-
sults, and rejected at Dr. Little's
resignation.

The decentralization of the
college's office and replacement
of the dean by a group of young (in-
spirit) advisers is advocated by
Dr. Little. This too was rejected
at Michigan, when in 1926 the
dean of women was replaced by
three young women as advisers.
Last year, members of the senior
class, who had been under both
regimes, were asked to vote
anonymously on which system
they preferred. The adviser sys-
tem was preferred almost unani-
mously; yet, Michigan will have a
dean of women again next year.

Dr. Little disapproves of fraterni-
ties as societies contrary to the
spirit of democracy and breed-
ing of narrow loyalty to the chap-
ter rather than to the college.
"Automobiles and liquor were
censured, and being unnecessarily
complicating factors during a
period of extremely difficult orien-
tation and adjustment. He be-
lieves that their wise use should
be taught the student before he
reaches the college age. As the
situation stands liquor should
be forbidden entirely and auto-
mobiles restricted to the first two
years. Since 1927, automobiles,
with a few exceptions, have been
forbidden to all students at Michi-
gan.

Co-education, states Dr. Little
"introduces a needless complex-
ity which leads to unwise and ex-
cessive efforts in emotional adjust-
ment at a period where the forma-
tion and establishment of habits
of intellectual activity are most
needed." Compulsory military
training was characterized as a
needless irritant which reduces
the effectiveness of a college educa-
tion.

The foregoing were the student
problems discussed, which, in the
opinion of Dr. Little, prevent stu-
dents from attaining their fullest
possible individual development.
Six more deterrents, hampering
chiefly the governing boards of
colleges were next brought to
light. These are, briefly, the atti-
tude of narrow specialized pre-
fessionalism possessed by a num-
ber of college faculty members;
the excess of professional spirit in
teacher training, and in what
he terms the three "pseudo pro-
fessional" fields, namely, home
economics, divinity, and journal-
ism; and the selfish interests of
state officials, local residents, and
individual donors.

To decrease the oft-discussed
"over-emphasis" on college athlet-

ics Dr. Little believes in encour-
aging individual participation
and more teams; and during
games, the delegation of more re-
sponsibility to the students and
less to the professional coach. The
formation of an "alumni univer-
sity" is recommended as a
means of maintaining student in-
terest after graduation. The au-
thor notes in a chapter on "Reli-
gion in College" an increase in
religious liberalism and a decrease
in blind obedience to demoni-
cal dogmas, which he says "are
evidences of the growing impor-
tance of individual initiative and
spiritual strength among stu-
dents."

Summing up, we find this para-
graph: "The order of the day is
unite in crystallizing the conclu-
sion that our colleges are rapidly
losing touch with the fact that mod-
ern youth demands, and should re-
ceive, support in its natural desire
for independence and responsibility
of a higher order. Rigorous
domination by fixed organized au-
thority vested in a favored and
privileged group of adults has be-
come an obsolete and useless prac-
tice."

This greater democratization,
this taking of the mass or unpriv-
ileged class into confidence, Dr.
Little believes is a characteristic
of nearly all other fields of mod-
ern endeavor. Individual initiative
and the correlated diminution
of vested authority are apparent,
he points out, in industry, busi-
ness, medicine, politics, and in
international relations. They can
be seen as coming tendencies in
religion and education, as well,
which have been slower in permit-
ting their adoption. "Certainly,"
he says "the situation in our colleges
is too critical to permit the usual
elaborate and slow development of
a complicated period of transition.
Immediate recognition and fear-
less uncompromising action are
necessary. The issue is clear, the
challenge is direct, and the re-
sponse must be worthy of our ori-
gin and tradition."

A review of Dr. Little's book
cannot be closed without refer-
ence to its style, which like his
manner in public talks, is made
vivid by his sincerity, his direct-
ness, and his apt phrases and
humor. In his discussion of
Teacher Training, the following
figure of speech delights the reader:
"The definite and impressive
political strength of teachers—
also irritates the more delicate

academic members of the uni-
versity nose. This is especially
true if the basal appendage is
naturally a bit uptight, for the
aroma of the political arises from
a "lower level." In the same
chapter he says, "Occasionally
some one raises his voice in pro-
test and is almost immediately
submerged in a mass of irate
ladies as was Bageheer by irate
monkeys in the Cold Lairs before
he reached the pole."

In a discussion of agricultural
colleges, we find this: "Every well
organized college of agriculture
has, for example, one or more
courses—in 'cheese-making.' The
grades given to students in the
course are the same as in other
college work: A, excellent; B,
good; C, satisfactory; D, passable;
E, failure; and F, complete fail-
ure. Sometimes, when sleep has
refused to come, I have wondered
about the grade of 'B' in such a
course. Did it mean that the stu-
dent failed entirely to complete
a cheese? Did it indicate that he
produced a substance resembling
cheese but not identifiable as
cheese? or did it mean that he
produced a cheese which under some
standard test (perhaps blindfold)

was pronounced a complete fail-
ure? The last named situation is
perhaps the most serious, for it
permits of the possibility of lead-
ing perhaps to still further
degradation or crippling of the
rural population, should such a
person be carelessly allowed to get
back on a farm supporting dairy
cattle."

Guest: "Who is that awful look-
ing frump over there?"
Host: "Why, that's my wife."

Guest: "Oh er—I beg your pa-
don that's my mistake."

Host (silly): "No, no—mine."

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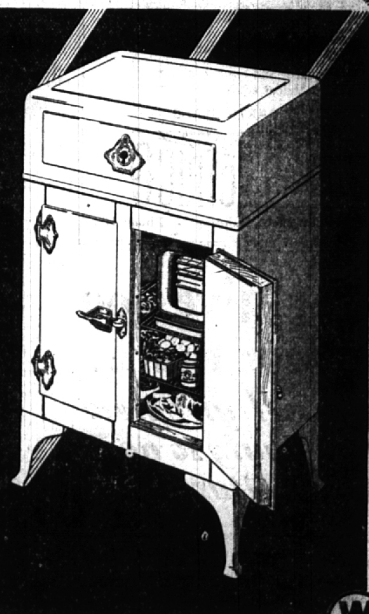
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