In the Educational Wonderland

TEXAS—Thirty-eight undergraduates of Southern Methodist university were enjoying a social hour in a dormitory recently. Most of the men were athletes. Questioned when the social hour was interrupted by university authorities, several admitted that a few friendly dice were rolled. S.M.U. suspended the thirty-eight. Several of those suspended were leading track stars who were to participate in the athletics for S.M.U. at Fort Worth March 16.

NEW YORK—Charles A. Bennett, Yale professor, writing in the Bookman for March, declaresthat the college professor does not have time to think. "The trouble is that teachers are goaded by too many demands, they become distracted and are left without any quiet place in the mind," he writes. "You cannot give from nine to twelve lectures a week on, say, four different subjects, without feeling that you are dissipating your mental energy. Such lectures are not the fruit of meditation and mature knowledge, but something that you must get up under artificial pressure. Moreover, you have to sit on committees. Committee meetings and faculty meetings cut into one's time and enhance the general feeling of hurry. Add to this the fact that you are eager for promotion and that to be promoted you must publish something, whether you are ready to publish or not, and it becomes clear that the teacher's chief obstacle under modern conditions is the general atmosphere of strain and restlessness in which his life is passed. Our democratic clamor for education forces us to teach the young in droves and so the impression remains of an audience, willing and receptive enough, but on the whole uncritical. In such conditions there is too little tonic and too little challenge."

MASSACHUSETTS—Are college professors creating a new religion? Writes William L. Sullivan in the March Atlantic Monthly: "It is remarkable to see how many college professors in the United States are writing protocols for a new religion. It may be a healthy sign, as solicitude for souls always is. Or it may be an academic episode without any significance at all . . . . There are psychologists, pedagogists and sociologists among us who seem to aspire to the office of fortune teller. They promise us everything, from a transfigured nursery in which the child shall be almost as wise as its parents to a super-society in which the parents shall be quite as happy as the child."

ILLINOIS—Did you major in college? Hear Colonel Clyde R. Terry, president of the Illinois Military school: "The time was when our sons were sent to college to acquire the education of a gentleman, and our daughters went to finishing schools for perfection in the little arts and graces. Today, the youngsters are in too much of a hurry. As a result, they are educated like pigs so that they can stick their noses in the trough and get as much as possible. American colleges have gone too far toward specialization. The aim of education is not to train our boys and girls to make a living, but to fit them to live with other people. Greek and Latin may be regarded, in this age of speed, as nonessential, but it is true that these subjects give a student the cultural background . . . . Never has there been a greater period in history marked by greater prevalence of nervous diseases than the present. Every death from heart disease is an indictment against modern educational methods."

NEW YORK—"The curse of university instruction is invariably the textbook," writes Harold J. Laski of London University in the March Century. "Works of this kind are read by all but the first rate student; and they deprive all but him of that thing essential to a tough mind, the thing William James called 'the pungent sense of effective reality' . . . . The business of
a university is not the transformation of undergraduates into fountains of information. It does not seek to make men expert in their life's career. Its business is the very different task of teaching the student how facts are converted into truth. . . . The student cannot know until he has learned to doubt. . . . He must learn that it is not necessarily right to be theist or agnostic, radical or conservative. A university has nothing to do with the dogmas comprised within these philosophies. It seeks only to confer habits of mind which enable the student to weigh the significance of facts from the angle of philosophy. . . . Of the brief classroom paper in which short factual answers are sought, admirably satirized in Owen Wister's "Philosophy Four"—I can only say they seem to me sheer waste of time. They test nothing but the poorest sort of memory and that only in a fashion in no way indicative of mental quality. They do not compel the student to weigh the significance of facts from the angle of philosophy. . . . University teachers, like the members of other professions, are, for the most part, mediocrities striving to be sublime; our business is to maximize their sublimity."

MARYLAND—Central Wesleyan college of Warrenton, Missouri, will hear no criticism of the much debated Volstead law. This was made clear in a letter written to the Kalends, the brilliant house organ of the Williams & Wilkins Co., publishers of scientific books at Baltimore. This little magazine had published a comment of a contributor on the dry law. Henry Vosholl, Wesleyan librarian, wrote in part: "Please discontinue the Kalends addressed to Central Wesleyan college. I am asking this because of the article 'On the Noble Experiment,' page 7. The tone and spirit of this discussion is thoroughly objectionable. It does not approach the subject fairly, nor deal with it fairly. In the mouthpiece of a big publishing house there is no excuse for such an article. Perhaps we must all agree that 'The Noble Experiment' has not yet become a complete success. Very few experiments in law are. But the unbiased observer notices in many ways that it has made a big difference. . . . When I go to St. Louis at the week end and have to take a street car or a train in the evening on Saturdays to get back home, there are not a lot of drunks aboard making themselves a nuisance or even endangering the lives of other passengers. To say 'it is altogether likely that more liquor is drunk per capita now than ten years ago' is blatant nonsense. Of course, there is liquor drunk. So there are murders committed. We have burglaries and hold ups. But irony and sarcasm do not cure evils. In fact, it is very easy to be humorous about the finest things in the world. But that does not prove anything." By and large, Mr. Vosholl wrote about the best defense of the Volstead act yet seen. Undoubtedly, his comment led the company to ask, "Shall the Kalends join the Rotarians?" Queen Victoria is dead, but her spirit rules in America.

Hunting in the Rockies
(Continued from page 263)

The Sooner Magazine