

Stalwart in Storms

1915-1945

It is interesting and perhaps significant that the date 1914, which marked the beginning of the first World War and the end of a long era of comparative peace in the world, marked also the end of an era in Cornell history. In 1914 President James E. Harlan resigned. The administration which linked the college with its pioneer period came to an end.

Signs of great changes in the world were already evident in college life. A strange form of entertainment called moving pictures occasionally drew the curious to Cedar Rapids to watch the wild capers of flickering shadows on a screen until the watchers' eyes rebelled. A few students, instead of coming by train, arrived in automobiles. In the spring of 1908 dinner at Bowman Hall one day ended abruptly when everyone in the dining room rushed down to the street to wave at the Italian and French automobiles participating in "a round-the-world race from New York to Paris by way of Siberia." In 1910 several students hired an automobile and were driven to Iowa City to see an airplane — one of the first ever flown over Iowa. When it took off directly toward them, the stu-

dents were so dismayed that they ran behind a building, and not unwisely, for the plane crashed on a shed roof only a few rods beyond.

The great technical strides of the twentieth century had begun. Perhaps only the graduates of that second decade know the full depth of the chasm which separates the world before 1914 from the world after. They had been trained for one kind of life; they stepped out of college halls not only into the proverbial "cold world" but into a changed world. It was not merely a matter of automobile and airplane versus horse and buggy, or even of war versus peace; it was a change in the whole intellectual climate.

An English poet lecturing on the Cornell campus in March, 1913, gave warning of these winds of change for those who had ears to hear. Alfred Noyes speaking on "The Future of Poetry" deplored the coming of "a generation that relies upon its mere cleverness" and summoned them to "look with courage at the image of truth presented in the hieroglyphs of God." The next morning in chapel the poet spoke about the rivalry in armament increasing in Europe, especially between the navies of Germany and Britain. Less than eighteen months later war was touched off by an assassination in Serbia, and the world storms which followed have not yet subsided.

Cornell has been whipped by those storms of war and revolution and depression, but like a tree

with its roots deep in solid earth, it has weathered the winds in stalwart fashion and has continued to grow. Many persons have made valuable contributions to that growth. Among them the names of only a few can be mentioned in this short history, and even their work must be briefly noted.

In April, 1917, a week after war was declared by the United States Congress, President Flint inaugurated military drill on the campus. Over 150 men had already enlisted. The girls joined classes in first aid and the groups of town women making surgical dressings. In the fall the enrollment of men was 25 per cent below normal. Capt. W. N. MacQueen, a Canadian officer, was secured to direct military drill. In January, 1918, drill became compulsory, and in October the Student Army Training Corps was organized under the command of Capt. Walter L. Tooze. Altoona and Guild and the old Gigantic became barracks, and the "day chapel" a mess hall. Several faculty men joined the "four-minute speakers" for the Liberty Loan campaigns. The "flu" epidemic which swept the country that fall put half the students to bed but caused no deaths on the campus. The Cornell Service Flag, however, bore fourteen gold stars by the time the war reports were all in.

Armistice Day was celebrated, as everywhere, with wild rejoicing—a parade, bands playing, speeches, dancing in the streets. A month later the S.A.T.C. was demobilized. The Christmas vaca-

tion was extended one week because of the serious fuel shortage that severe winter. During the years of struggle over the peace negotiations, the faculty were, almost solidly, supporters of the League of Nations.

The growth of Cornell since 1915 has been guided by five presidents, each of whom by special talents contributed to its normal and well-rounded development: They were Dr. Charles Wesley Flint (1915-1922), Dr. Harlan Updegraff (1923-1927), Dr. Herbert J. Burgstahler (1927-1939), Dr. John Benjamin Magee (1939-1943), and Dr. Russell David Cole (1943 to the present time). Two of these, Dr. Updegraff and Dr. Cole, are Cornell alumni. During short "interregnum periods" in 1922-1923 and in 1927 Dr. William S. Ebersole, registrar for nineteen years, served as acting president.

Deans of the college Dr. Clyde E. Wildman (1924-1926), Dr. T. Raymond McConnell (1932-1936), and Dr. Jay B. MacGregor (1937-1952) and Dean of Women Alice R. Betts (1924-1943) gave valuable service and wise direction in student affairs and in curriculum planning. Dr. Frank Cole as vice-president (1927-1947) competently directed the financial destiny of the college through a difficult period. In spite of some losses Cornell came safely through the serious depression of the 1930's, largely because of the aid of the Emmert Foundation. In fact,

growth in physical equipment was remarkable during that decade.

In 1915 a brick structure on Main Street, originally built by Elder Bowman, was remodeled into Guild Hall, so named because, as the town's first hotel, it had been operated by Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Guild. After remodeling, it first housed the Academy, which had been reorganized as a teacher-training high school with Margaret Taylor as principal. In 1921 Guild became a dormitory. The Altoona, also a former hotel which had become college property, was remodeled and opened as a dormitory in 1919. Rood House, the old home of Colonel H. H. Rood, facing the campus, was presented to the college in 1918 by the class of '94 as a dormitory for junior and senior women.

In 1924 sod was broken for the Law Memorial Building, gift of Dr. Marion Law (ex-'90) in honor of his parents. With a small addition from other funds, it provided much needed space for the departments of geology, biology, and physics. Its dedication in 1925 was followed by the unveiling of a bronze tablet in the corridor in honor of Dr. Norton, whose teaching, long remembered by Marion Law, had inspired the gift of money entrusted to him by a member of his church in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Old Sem, which had lost its top floor by fire in 1924, was restored in 1931 to its original pioneer lines, and equipped for chemistry. Harlan House

and Collin House, providing additional housing for faculty members, came into possession of the college during the 1920's, the former by bequest, the latter by purchase.

In 1930 Pfeiffer Hall, a new dormitory for women, was built and named in honor of the donors Henry and Annie Merner Pfeiffer, whose interest and friendship had been won by President Burgstahler. Six years later the same generous friends of Cornell provided funds for the building of Merner Hall for men, and later for a large addition to Pfeiffer. Other gifts from the Pfeiffers made possible the remodeling of Bowman Hall and of King Memorial Chapel, and the installation of a new organ.

In 1937 Armstrong Hall of Fine Arts was erected, the gift of Blanche Swingley Armstrong ('91), who added a fund of fifty-three thousand dollars for maintenance and also her valuable collection of paintings, art objects, and books.

Accompanying this physical expansion in buildings and equipment was a corresponding growth in endowment. In 1918 President Flint successfully completed a campaign for \$650,000, which included a gift of \$100,000 from the General Education Board. In 1928 President Burgstahler rounded out a campaign for \$1,600,000, including gifts from the General Education Board and the Carnegie Corporation. Through the years gifts and bequests by alumni, trustees, and friends have

built an impressive group of scholarship funds, library endowments, and special foundations. Among the most important of these have been the Pfeiffer Foundation, the William F. Johnston Fund, the Ebersole Foundation, and the Senator James E. MacMurray bequest.

Growth and changes in curriculum in the past forty years have been almost as great as those of the first half century. With the exception of a department of home economics, organized in 1917, they represent the spreading of branches already formed on the young tree. Comparing the catalog of 1950 with that of 1910, one finds more courses in the fine arts, education, sociology, economics, political science, and physical education, trends characteristic of the times in higher education everywhere in the country.

In 1916 the B.S. degree was abolished in favor of a single degree, the Bachelor of Arts. Since 1922 the degree of Bachelor of Music has also been offered, and since 1925 that of Bachelor of Music Education.

Beginning in the 1920's several national honor societies have established chapters at Cornell, giving recognition and stimulation to scholarship: Phi Beta Kappa, oldest honorary scholastic society, Delta of Iowa, 1922; Tau Kappa Alpha, honorary forensic fraternity, first Iowa chapter, 1925; National Collegiate Players, honorary fraternity in dramatic art, Pi Epsilon Delta, 1930; Beta Beta

Beta, honorary fraternity in the biological sciences, Epsilon Iota, 1937; Mortar Board, honorary society for senior women, Torch chapter, 1943; Pi Kappa Lambda, honorary society in music, 1948.

During the administration of Dr. Flint the curriculum was reorganized into a system of majors, and requirements for a degree were stated in these terms. Under Dr. Updegraff the aims and objectives of the liberal arts program were clarified in such a way as to benefit curriculum planning. At the present time the requirements for the A.B. degree, beyond the specific ones applying to all students, are stated in terms of "a program of concentration," which may be one of three types, requiring departmental, divisional, or functional majors. A student is thus guarded against too much scattering of his energy and also against too great concentration in a limited field. The current catalog states: "The curriculum and varied projects of the College are designed to extend the student's knowledge, skill, and appreciation in six great areas of culture — the Fine Arts, the Social Sciences, the Sciences, Languages and Literature, Philosophy and Religion, and Health and Physical Education." The courses are presented under these six divisions.

The erection of Armstrong Hall in 1937 gave much needed space for the expansion of the fine arts. Courses in art history and appreciation and varied offerings in painting, design, crafts, and

commercial art, begun by Nama Lathe (1922-1948), were given room for further development. An exhibition room providing for exhibits by students, alumni, and faculty, as well as traveling exhibits by contemporary artists, was an important feature of the building. Collections periodically on display there continue to enrich the life of the college and the community.

The School of Dramatic Art had its beginnings under Professor Rose Evelyn Baker. She sponsored the organization of the Speech Arts Club which developed into the Purple Masquers. The rising interest in dramatics was spurred by the lively cooperation of Professor Clyde Tull who had come to the English department in 1916, and by the creative work of Jewell Bothwell Tull, poet and dramatist. She authored and both directed a splendid historical pageant which celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the college in 1928. The Tulls directed numerous plays given out of doors and in the chapel until 1932, when Albert and Bertha Johnson became directors of the Little Theater. Its place in Cornell life has continued to grow, especially since the acquisition of completely modern equipment in auditorium, stage, lighting, dressing rooms, and property rooms in Armstrong Hall. The first play given in the new theater was *As You Like It*, and Orlando was played by Chester Webb who is now director.

The Conservatory of Music also found much

needed space in Armstrong Hall. Under the direction, successively, of Frank H. Shaw, Ezra H. F. Weis, John E. Conrad, Harold W. Baltz, and Lloyd Oakland, and with the able teaching of Ruth A. Pinkerton, Helen Venn, Jacques Jolas, and others, the Conservatory continued to enrich campus and community life in addition to providing a well-rounded education in music for talented students. The courses in music education have gained increasing recognition. Offerings in musical culture and appreciation attract many students majoring in other fields. The May Music Festival, the presentation of the *Messiah* by the Oratorio Society in December, concerts by the college orchestra, the glee clubs, and the college choir have brought thousands of visitors to the campus. In 1928, at the time of the twenty-fifth appearance of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the college conferred the degree of Doctor of Music on Frederick Stock. Through the years he was affectionately counted one of the Cornell "family," and friends welcomed the opportunity to greet him at the White House after the Saturday evening concert. By the time of his death in 1942 he had conducted 112 concerts at the Cornell Festivals.

The English department has been especially fortunate in leadership, giving a balanced emphasis to both scholarly and creative work. Professor Howard C. Lane since 1923 has inspired on the campus not only respect but deep enthusiasm for

his courses in literature, especially Chaucer and Milton. Many students enrolling for the minimum of required hours in "Lit" have found themselves returning the next semester, drawn by the stimulating challenge of a great teacher.

Since 1916 Professor Clyde "Topy" Tull, with his gift for evoking creative talent wherever there was a promising glint, has started an impressively large group of young writers on successful careers and, aided with enthusiasm by Jewell Bothwell Tull, has made Cornell known as a center of creative writing. The English Club has become a campus institution. In 1922 it began the publication of the *Husk*, which the work of Winifred Mayne Van Etten, Marjorie Holmes Mighell, Edward Weismiller, Ruth Messenger, Louis Wilson, Bob Osborne, and many others has made outstanding among student publications all over the country. In 1935 the English Club, under the sponsorship of the Tulls, began also the publication of a series of Cornell College Chapbooks, slender hand-printed volumes of poetry, stories, or essays. The first was *Burroak and Sumac*, by Jay G. Sigmund, Iowa poet. The latest, a centennial publication, is a reprint of *Two Essays* by William Harmon Norton, first published in the *Hibbert Journal* of London. Since 1928 Winifred Van Etten ('25) has brought to the English department a rare combination of creative talent in teaching, scholarship, and writing. Alumni who

have entered the field of creative writing readily recognize their debt to Cornell and the staff which first encouraged their labors.

In foreign languages in the past four decades, there has been, as in all schools, a drift away from the classics, but Cornell continues to offer elementary courses in Greek and a major in Latin. Interest in Spanish, begun in 1921 under Dr. Erwin K. Mapes ('09), who after three years went to the State University, has steadily grown. Through the pressure and strains of two wars, German, under Dr. Charles R. Keyes, maintained its influential place in the curriculum. French found able and enthusiastic advocates successively in Guy M. Knox, Louis Herrick, and Ruby C. Wade ('05). Miss Wade, after a career of thirty years, during which all campus activities were enriched by her vital personality, died in 1947.

The division of the sciences and mathematics has flourished under able teachers, several of whom, like their predecessors, have devotedly built their lives into that of the college. In the chemistry department, following Dr. Harry F. Lewis (1921-1928), who went to Ohio Wesleyan, and is at present head of the Institute of Paper Chemistry at Appleton, came Dr. J. B. Culbertson, who, with his assistants, has equipped some fifty majors for the quest of graduate degrees in chemistry, and many other students for medical courses.

The biology department, under Dr. Frank G.

Brooks since 1936, has also emphasized pre-professional training for the various fields of medical science, and has contributed to Cornell's splendid record in graduate study. Dr. Brooks is also editor of *Bios*, leading magazine in the field of biology. Physics was ably handled by Dr. Orrin Smith (1914-1925) and then by Dr. Roy A. Nelson, who, in 1944, became financial secretary of the college.

Geology, following the retirement of Dr. Norton in 1923, came under the direction of one of his former students, J. Robert Van Pelt ('18) until he was called to larger responsibilities at the Rosenwald Industrial Museum in 1928 and later to the presidency of the Montana School of Mines. Dr. Neil Miner, who became head of the department in 1937, increased its attraction by a six-weeks summer school in the Wind River Mountains, Wyoming. Since the death of Dr. Miner in 1947, this field work at Camp Norton has been continued under his successor, Herbert E. Hendriks ('40). Dr. Norton continued to teach his famous course in evolution until 1944. His teaching through the years and especially in this course was well described by Judge Dean W. Peisen ('09) as the "catalytic agency . . . blending the religious earnestness of early Cornell with the new spirit of science."

The department of mathematics, following the retirement of Mary Burr Norton in 1919, was

combined with Engineering under the able direction of Dr. Elmer E. Moots until his recent retirement. Loyal alumni are raising a scholarship fund in his name. From 1910 to 1945 F. M. McGaw, as assistant professor and then professor of mathematics, made his kindly influence felt in the lives of many students.

In the division of the social sciences the major developments in the past thirty years have been in the departments of political science and sociology. In 1924 Dr. C. F. Littell was brought to Cornell by President Updegraff to develop the department of political science. Hundreds of enthusiastic alumni witness to the success of the "Judge." More than 150 of them have gone on to graduate study and advanced degrees in this field. Active alumni known as the "Statesmen's Group" are building a loan and scholarship fund to provide four scholarships in political science.

Sociology first became a separate department under Professor Sidney L. Chandler in 1916. His course, "The Family and the Home," was one of the earliest on that subject given in the Midwest. The department now offers from fifteen to twenty courses. Since 1938 it has been under the competent direction of Dr. J. Harold Ennis ('25).

Economics, once linked with sociology, has been developed separately since 1932 under the able direction of Dr. C. L. Rich.

The departments of education and psychology,

inter-related through the years, had an influence beyond the strictly educational field, under the direction of William E. Slaght (1920-1932), George Tyson (1921-1927), T. Raymond McConnell (1932-1934), and Samuel McLaughlin (1936-1946). Dr. Alberta Munkres (1936-1946) made a notable contribution in elementary education.

The department of philosophy and religion flourished under Dr. Clyde E. Wildman until he was called to Boston University and later to the presidency of De Pauw. Since 1932 it has been directed by Dr. Albion R. King, teacher, scholar, and writer. Dr. Miron A. Morrill since 1947 has also made an effective contribution in campus religious activities.

The library, which serves all departments, has grown and changed with the changing patterns of the curriculum. When the Carnegie building, which seemed so spacious in 1905, gradually became crowded, the fine arts library was moved to Armstrong Hall, where there was space for the growing collection of prints, slides, and records. Reference books for chemistry, biology, and geology were moved to convenient locations near the laboratories in Old Sem and the Law Building. Head librarian May Fairbanks, after forty years of service, retired in 1931 and was succeeded by Dorothy Medary Higbie ('10). Mary Parsons, assistant librarian since 1922, is archivist.

Health and physical education, as in all colleges, have become increasingly significant both in the curriculum and in campus activities. About 1921 the program changed from gymnastic and apparatus work to games, sports, and informal play. General theory courses and courses for majors in physical education are now offered, as well as instruction and participation in sports. Since the swimming pool was installed in 1917, a swimming proficiency test has been a prerequisite for graduation. In 1940 a new health service program began with Dr. F. F. Ebersole as physician.

The Women's Athletic Association was organized in 1916 "for the promotion and encouragement of physical and social development among all women at Cornell under the supervision of the Physical Education Department." Volleyball, basketball, softball, tennis, swimming, and dancing, provide exercise and recreation for women. Orchesis, a dance club, and the Aquatic Club, both organized in the '30's, continue to function in a vital way. Dorothy Rogers ('24), efficient director of physical education for women, was succeeded in 1945 by Ethel Ryan ('14), who maintains high enthusiasm in the department.

Following the departure of Director and Coach Sherman W. Finger to the University of Minnesota in 1924, Dick Barker and Judd Dean were in turn succeeded by Glenn Cunningham, Walton Koch, and Paul Scott.

Among the major sports for men, wrestling replaced baseball in 1923. Under the expert coaching of Dick Barker, Cornell wrestlers made the Olympic team. Paul Scott, one of the champion wrestlers of the 20's, returning as coach, trained a team which in 1947 won the championship of the National Collegiate Athletic Association and also of the Amateur Athletic Union. Cornell wrestling teams have consistently ranked among the top ten in the NCAA during recent years.

The earlier literary societies have been replaced by various social clubs and by organizations which represent special student interests, such as the Sociology Club, the Chemistry Club, the Art Students League, the Home Economics Club, the Oxford Fellowship. Student government is directed by the Student Council of nine members, Associated Women Students, and the Men's Senate.

When the second World War burst in 1941, Cornell, owing to the able management of President Magee and later President Cole, was one of twenty educational institutions in the country selected for a Naval Flight Preparatory School. At intervals between January, 1943, and September, 1944, twenty-five hundred cadets in all "came aboard" and were housed in Merner, Bowman, Rood, Guild, and Altoona, which became known by ship names. A new terminology spread to other parts of the campus. "Chow" was provided by the college dietitian, Leila Huebsch, and her

regular staff, with some extra help from the student body and townspeople.

The Commencement address of June 6, 1944, was delivered by Admiral William D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to President Roosevelt. In July a Naval Academic Refresher Unit took over the equipment and continued on the campus until 1945. This unit, made up largely of Marines fresh from active service in the Pacific area, brought to the campus men who were exceptionally eager for college training. Many returned after the war to complete their college work. These young men and hundreds like them who survived the war were aided in their quest for education with the "GI Bill of Rights." Their steadfastness of purpose and inquiring minds infused a healthy spirit onto college campuses everywhere. At Cornell, they met and exceeded the scholastic requirements in their determination to take on with a minimum of delays the tasks of a peaceful society.

While these things were happening on the campus, more than a thousand Cornell students and graduates were serving in the armed forces and the merchant marine all over the world, and others were active on a civilian basis in technical work. A *Gold Star Memorial Bulletin*, published by the college in October, 1946, gave brief biographies of thirty-five men who had died in service.

When the veterans began to return to the campus in 1946, supplemental housing units for mar-

ried students were rapidly built, as on almost every campus in the country, and young couples shared family responsibilities while one or both continued their college courses. Oftentimes, these campus couples took on the added responsibilities of parenthood and gave their youngsters an early priority for enrollment in the class of 1965!

MARJORIE MEDARY