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Comment

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Comment by the Editor

LET THERE BE COLLEGES

Iowa is preëminently a State of colleges. No less than eleven institutions of higher education, including the State University, were founded within the first decade of Statehood. Seventy-five years later, seven of the original eleven still survived to be counted among the seventeen standard colleges in Iowa. One out of every one hundred and eleven residents of Iowa in 1921 was a college student, which was more than double the ratio for the whole United States. If there are too many colleges in Iowa, as has often been asserted, the mistake seems to have contributed toward a highly creditable result.

Iowa colleges were founded in a spirit of service to the Commonwealth, the local community, or the sect that gave them patronage. Conscious of the opportunity to shape frontier society and inspired with a vision of broad prairies flowering with a splendid civilization, the practical pioneers were guided by their innate idealism. Impatient of delay, they built colleges before students were prepared for the classical training that was then offered. Though the discipline may seem puritanical, it was designed to inculcate the principles of Christianity

so deeply that religion and morality would abide forever. That the environment might be conducive to study and right conduct, the colleges were located away from the distraction and evil of cities.

With no thought of material profit, the founders of Iowa colleges cheerfully accepted the heavy burden of financial support when it meant personal privation. Some men literally gave themselves to the cause of education by assuming obligations for a favorite college which required a lifetime of toil and sacrifice to fulfill. Others, filled with consecrated loyalty, kept their places on the faculty, year after year, when their meager salary was not paid in full and when other institutions offered better opportunities for professional advancement. These heroic patrons and teachers are entitled to honor and reward that they will never receive, for the generation that knew them has passed. Yet the influence of the good they did can never die.

Of such devotion, sacrifice, and vision is the heritage of the colleges of Iowa.

J. E. B.