Blanshard Condemns Apathy, Uniformity As Handicaps To Excellence In Education

By EDDIE PRICE

"The test of a university is the sort of person it produces."

Speaking on this theme to an enthusiastic audience Thursday, Dr. Brand Blanshard, Sterling Professor-Emeritus of Philosophy from Yale continued, "but American education is producing far fewer great men than it should."

DR. BLANSHARD stated that the new demands of science, the pressure toward uniformity, over-differentiation of the sexes, and apathy toward intellectual distinction are among the forces which are handicapping our efforts toward excellence.

"Science, for the most part, ignores persons and their values. It gives no recognition to consciousness, which is the only true reality. Art and literature provide food for imagination and feeling. And for estimation of the goods and evils of life, imagination is of more use than logic."

MOVING TO the evils of uniformity, Dr. Blanshard said, "Surrender to the mass mind is one of our chief dangers. Crowds cannot think, nor journals, nor radios, nor even universities. Only individuals can think."

With a lighter touch, he deplored the unfortunate American ideals of masculine and feminine perfection.

"Youth, romance, and the bloom of beauty have been so played up that the woman who has moved beyond them, however much a person, is apt to feel forlorn."

"On the other hand, as H. G. Wells pointed out, the ideal American man is a square-jawed, two-fisted fellow, cool in crises, ungiven to words, but much given to deeds that spring straight from a heart of gold."

"THIS IDEA has tarnished the gentle lives of the scholar, the thinker, the poet, and the artist with a suspicion of unmanliness. To the two-fisted type there is something a little effete and decadent about them."

Finally, he said that intellectual distinction receives little honor or respect in this country. The human mind needs an atmosphere of encouragement.

"A truly educated man," the Yale professor argued in the early part of his speech, "combines breadth of interest with sound judgment. He has the ability to see things in terms of their consequences, and possesses a firm set of values. He keeps his emotions and impulses under control."

DR. BLANSHARD cited several examples of such men who had been educated in English universities, and noted that Americans were particularly able to combine vigor and balance with a rigorous education.

But the atmosphere is wrong. "As education becomes more wide-spread, the dead weight of number may pull it down; its attractive power may no longer be sufficient to pull them up. Only one thing will. That is the buoyant magnetism of living examples scattered about the land, minds of light and sweep, persons that we can admire and envy and seek to emulate."