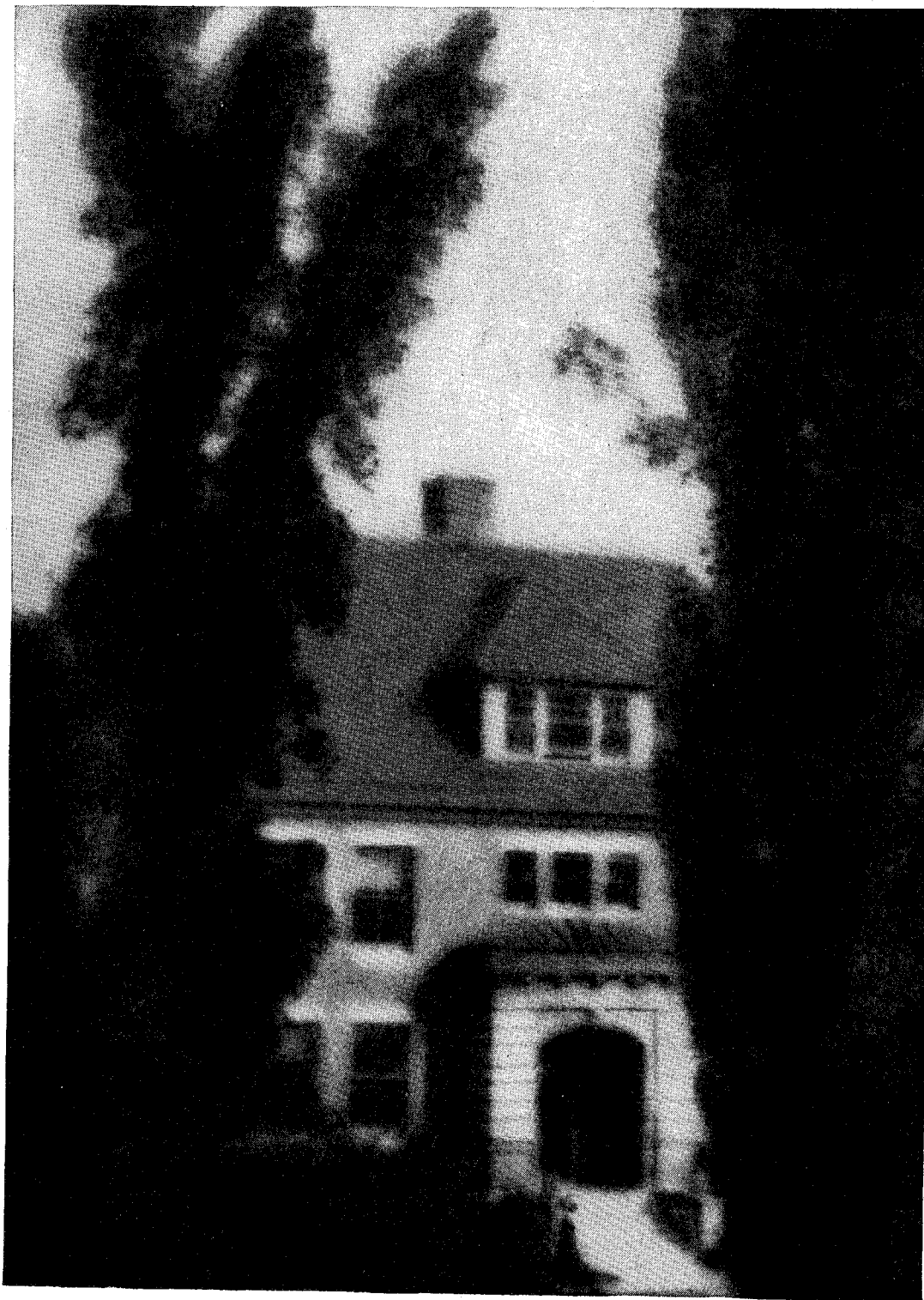


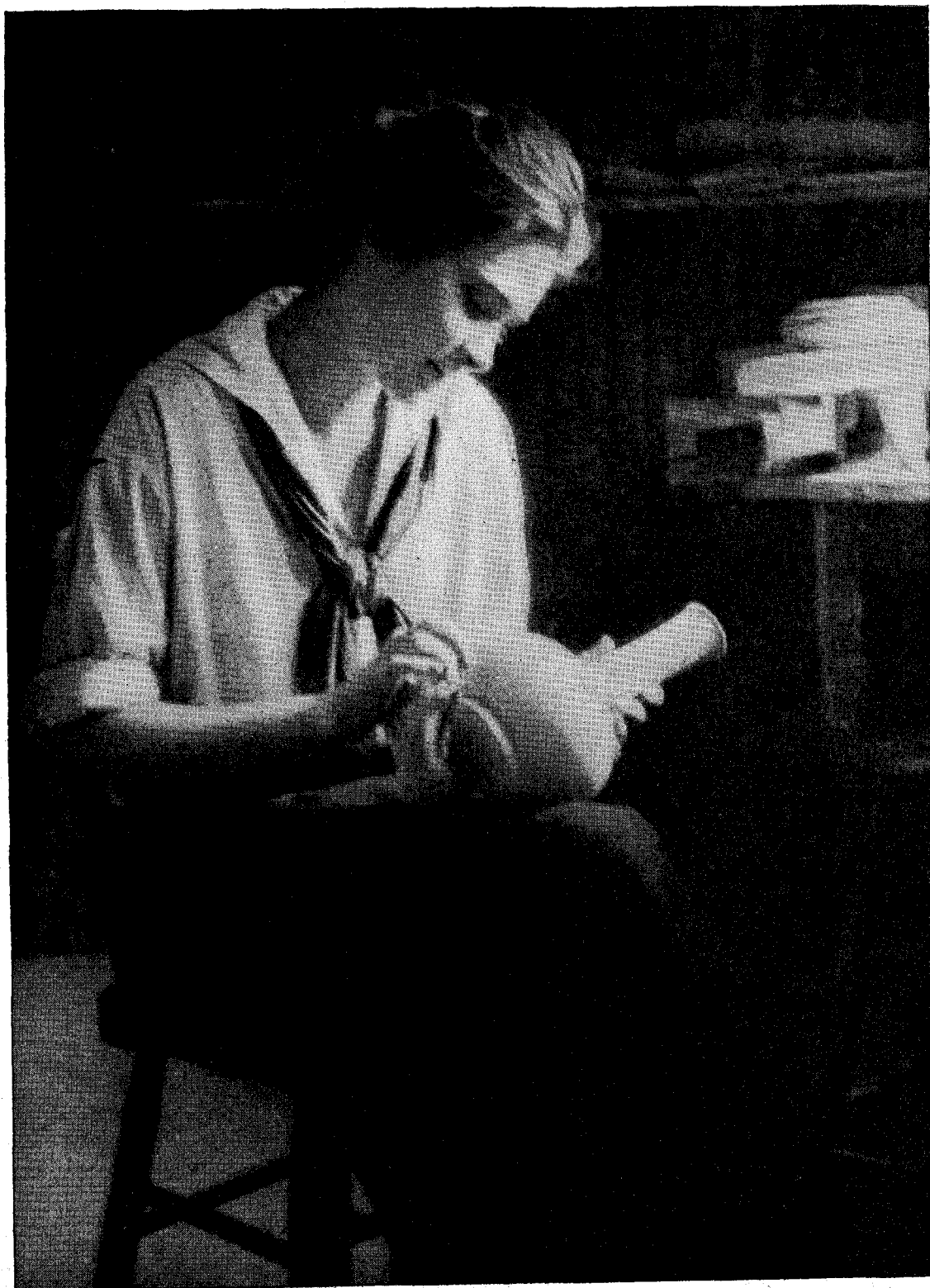
AS THE CLAY IN THE POTTER'S HAND

PICTURES BY HENRY HOYT MOORE



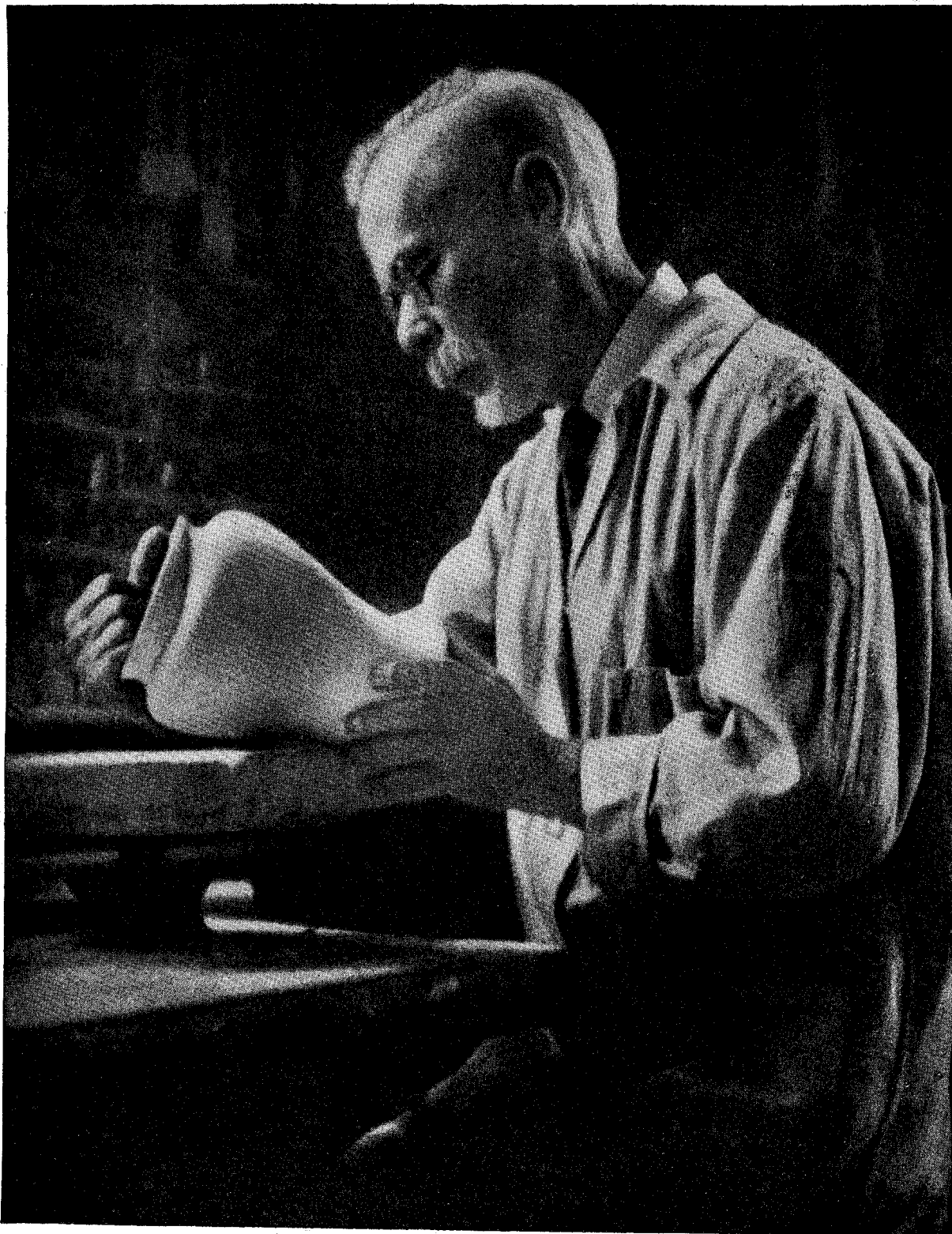
THE HOME OF THE SCHOOL OF CERAMICS

Alfred University is one of our small colleges such as Webster described when he said of Dartmouth, "It is a small college, and yet there are those who love it." It is in the town of Alfred, New York, about 75 miles southeast of Buffalo. This town was originally settled by Seventh-Day Baptists, whose customs still dominate the place. The University was chartered in 1857. Closely affiliated with it is the New York State School of Clay-Working and Ceramics



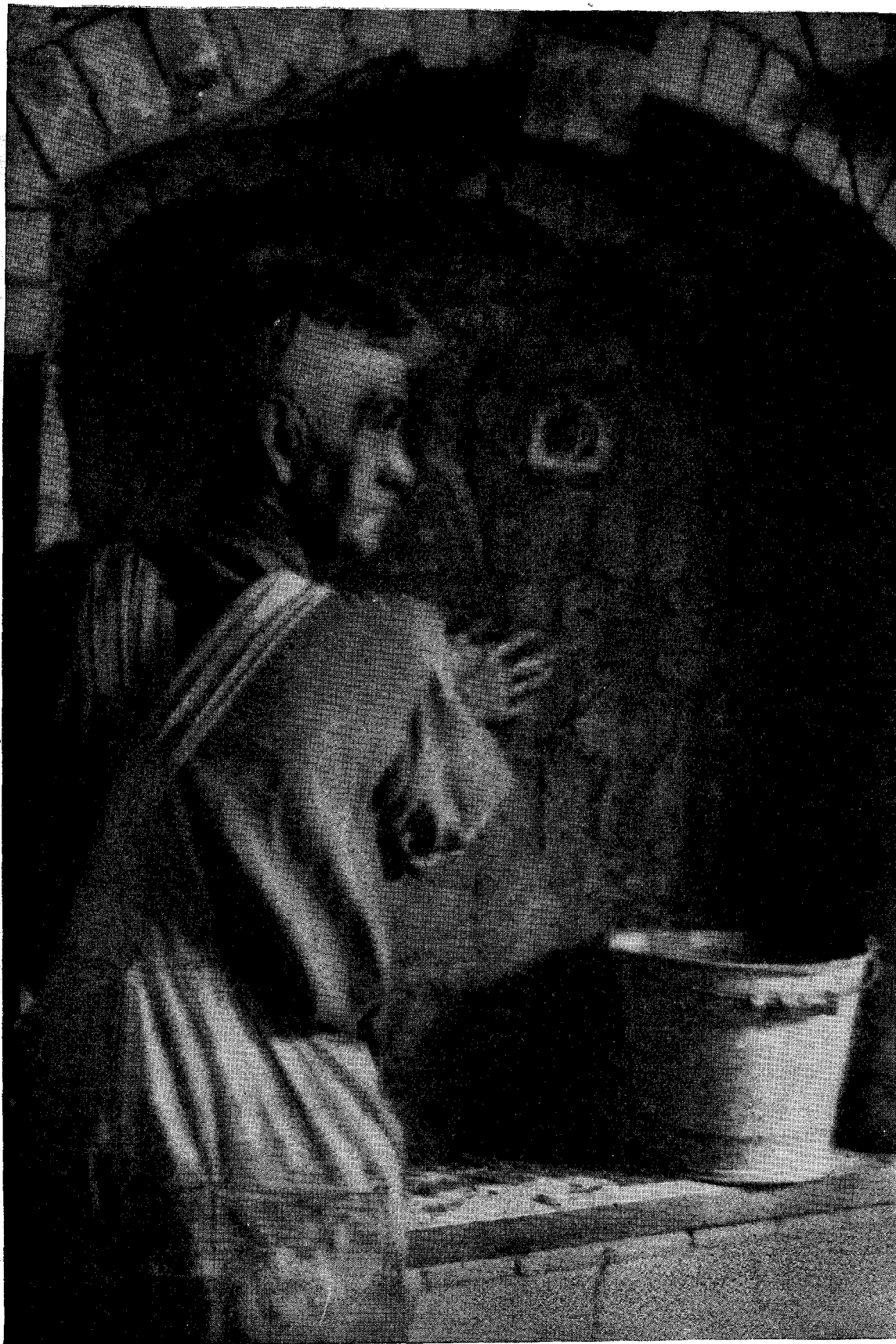
A PUPIL IN THE SCHOOL OF CERAMICS

In the Summer School at Alfred University the classes in ceramics occupy an important place. Enthusiastic devotion to their work characterizes the students, many of whom are teachers taking advanced courses. But the term ceramics has come to include much more than pottery. As developed at Alfred the course in Ceramic Engineering is designed to qualify men to occupy positions as superintendents, scientific experts, and ceramic chemists in the great plants devoted to the making of tiles, bricks, drain-pipes, etc., as well as in pottery works. The courses of study which lead to a degree in this department extend over a period of four years.



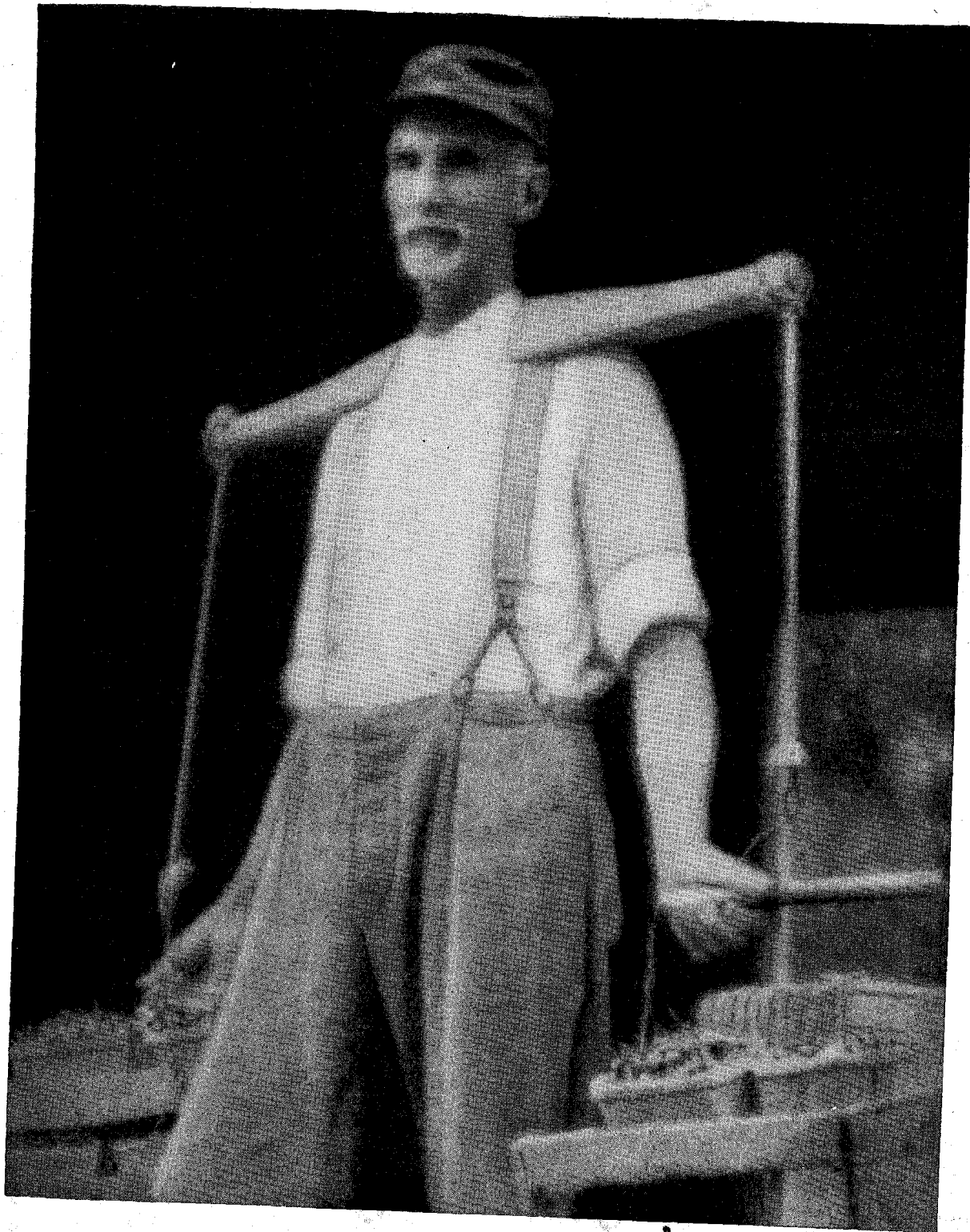
THE MASTER POTTER—PROFESSOR CHARLES F. BINNS

Professor Binns, sometime President of the American Ceramic Society, is one of the leading authorities on ceramics in this country. A thorough master of the theory of pottery-making, he is also an expert craftsman, and takes delight in demonstrating to his classes in the School of Ceramics the practical methods of the artist potter. He was born in England and was for many years connected with the Royal Porcelain Works of Worcester. His lectures to his students are notable for thorough grasp of the science, technology, and art associated with clay-working in all its branches



SEALING UP THE KILN IN WHICH THE POTTERY IS FIRED

After the students of the School of Ceramics have learned something of the art of molding pottery or "throwing" it on the potter's wheel, and then covering it with "glaze," their partly finished products are baked in the kiln, which is heated with the natural gas that supplies the town of Alfred with cheap light and fuel



A TEACHER OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL

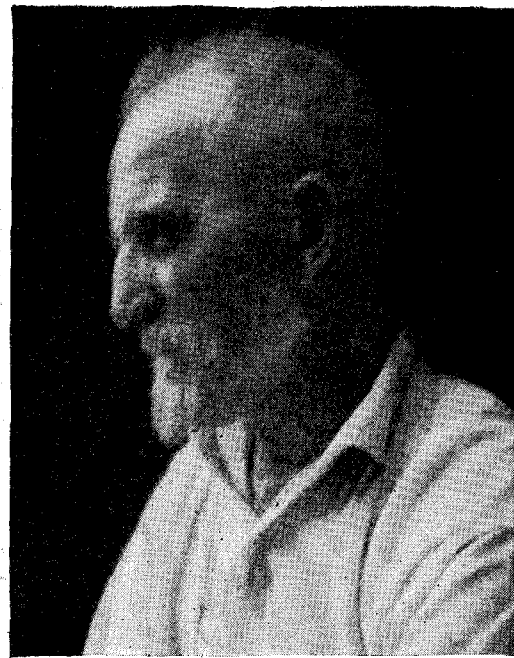
Alfred's "back yards" are so spacious that some of them amount to small farms. Professor Place, who obligingly posed for his portrait while at work in his big back yard, is seen with a contrivance made by himself for carrying berries. He conducts Alfred's classes in nature study and biology



VILLAGE SPORTS ON THE FOURTH—THE NAIL-DRIVING CONTEST



AN ALFRED GIRL



ALFRED'S BAKER

Most of Alfred's people seem to have received the impress of its University—they are gentle, kindly, and well spoken, with a suggestion of "difference" perhaps due to the observance of Saturday as the "Sabbath." On that day the stores are all closed, secular activities being resumed on Sunday. The University, however, observes both holy days. Even the small children know the distinction between the days. "Do you go to Sunday school?" a visitor asked a little boy. "No, sir," was the prompt reply; "I go to Sabbath school." The University has spread a circle of influence throughout the region in which it is situated that surprises and pleases the sojourner who comes to Alfred for a summer holiday

THE SATISFACTIONS OF INCOMPETENCY

BY MEL CRANE

TO this day I have looked forward often, always with a feeling of sorrow, and sometimes with dread. It has stood in my mind as the boundary mark between the two stages of my life, and the happier one the one behind. It is my thirtieth birthday.

Thirty is, in itself, the most unsatisfactory of ages. At thirty one does not have the matured judgment of middle age nor the philosophic calm that is said to be the redeeming joy of senescence. At thirty one's opinions have to be proved and not merely stated; one may be listened to with interest or amazement, but not always with respect. And, worst of all, at thirty one is youthful but no longer young.

No startling metamorphosis has taken place since yesterday, when I was twenty-nine, for, after all, a birthday is only a date and not a reagent. Yet it is a far different world from the one I used to know five years ago, and quite another thing altogether from what I thought I saw at twenty-one. I like it better. I have discovered what might be called the "satisfactions of incompetency."

By "incompetency" I imply the alternative definition according to Messrs. Funk & Wagnalls—"lack of the special qualities required for a particular purpose." I can do many things fairly well; I have even been able to make a very decent living under more than commonly agreeable conditions. But none of all the dreams and hopes and aspirations that I had at twenty-one has been realized, or ever will be. I lack the special qualities to do any one thing thoroughly well.

I had dreams in my early twenties, rather fine dreams, of the things that I was going to do. Some of them come to me still—wistful waifs that sometimes hover about when I cannot sleep o' nights and look at me a bit reproachfully. But if in their vague shapes there is a little of sadness for what never was, there is also a deal of the beauty of what might have been. They are rather agreeable ghosts to have haunt one.

Perhaps I hoped for too much. In the early twenties a mild form of egotism is almost a virtue, and, in any event, I was inoculated with it, for at that age I had just left college, where a goodly measure of success had been mine. I had entered, an unknown freshman afflicted with an offensive shyness. When I was graduated, I had become one of the "big" men of the university. By undergraduate standards I had achieved everything worth trying for save the 'Varsity letter in athletics. To cap the climax, in the spring of senior year, when so many other inconsequential "statistics" are compiled, I was voted "the brightest man in the class." I went out into the world with great curiosity and few doubts. Even now, when things go particularly badly I re-

flect upon that vote and gain courage to believe that I may not be an altogether hopeless ass, after all.

When first the suspicion dawned on me that perhaps I might not "do things," I was worried. When suspicion changed to substantial certainty, I was profoundly depressed—depressed and melancholy and spiritless. The depression lasted for several years—years that I wasted in futile regret when I might have had so much fun out of life. My regret now is for the wasted years rather than for the vanished visions, though, after all, it is a bit sad to know that with only one life to live there is scant hope of making as much out of it as one would like.

Then came the war, and with it one high adventure, one short romance, and one great sorrow. The end of 1919 found me still more embittered, disillusioned, and nearly lost to hope. I read tremendously. I tried to write myself, and couldn't. I talked and worked and associated with radicals and reformers of all sorts. I became interested in politics and economics, subjects that I had detested in college. And in the end I arrived somewhere—just where I do not know. When one in his rambles comes upon an unexpectedly lovely spot, its name is unimportant.

It is somewhere in what I have heard described as "the twilight zone called liberalism" that I now am, and I find it very pleasant. Excepting other liberals, there are few who care what a liberal thinks, and still fewer why he thinks it. The reactionaries class him with the radicals, and the radicals class him with the dubs. My own friends think that I am a bit crazy. It leaves me free to form, and occasionally to express, my own opinions without the obligation of explaining them, a thing which I do very poorly indeed.

We who stand here in this twilight zone like to think that we see things from the proper angle. People who stand elsewhere also like to think the same thing, and we all have the privilege of thinking the other a fool. Yet for myself, I know that in other days I never experienced the keen pleasure of discrimination that I experience now. It makes even the daily newspapers interesting.

As random examples of what I mean, I have learned to appreciate, almost automatically, such things as the vital difference between Lloyd George and Jan Smuts, while not lost in complete and rapt admiration for either, of between Henry van Dyke and Edgar Lee Masters. It is, by the way, in literature especially that this new discrimination gives me its chiefest rewards. Some authors I now cannot read at all, but, on the other hand, I can these days enjoy the ancient works of Plato and Marcus Aurelius quite as much as a new book by Zona Gale or Rose Macaulay. And the books that I do enjoy I enjoy so

much more than ever before. They seem not only more interesting, but more useful. "There," I say, "is something I must remember. It's a good line to spring on So-and-So next time he starts to argue." I make a note of it, and when next I meet my friend So and So I find that I have completely forgotten it. If any argument starts, he, as usual, wins it by default. Nor am I at all chagrined; it rather amuses me to reflect that he is mentally classing me as a "crack-brained parlor Bolshevik." He uses "crack-brained" in preference to "long-haired" because, knowing what I look like, he knows that the latter is an obvious misstatement. But what he thinks, and in especial what he thinks of me, no longer matters.

Therein lies the advantage of liberalism; therein also are the satisfactions of incompetency. For when one is a liberal he believes in many unpopular movements, and adheres too passionately to none; if he did, he would cease to be just a liberal and would be a Socialist, or a Communist, or a Single-Taxer, or something else instead. And when one is an incompetent he too may be acutely interested in many things and actively involved in none. Only those whose help is valuable are called upon to spend their lives in helping; only those who have accomplished something does any one bother to slander.

The path of the incompetent, therefore, is easy. If he be an incompetent who once dreamed dreams, he may enjoy vicariously the fruits of another's success without the accompanying pains of travail. The spark of divine discontent that once smoldered within him has flickered and gone out, and there are left only a few gray ashes—gray ashes and a few pale ghosts of unborn desires. But they are pleasant ghosts withal, and if sometimes the ashes seem too gray he may warm his hands at the fire a more competent person has kindled. The genius has fame, but the incompetent has fun.

And so to-day, at this milestone, I feel that life has not used me so badly, and that the world is a rather decent place, after all. With a body that is still young, I have already secured some of the compensations supposedly reserved for old age. For, once my high ambitions had faded, I came to feel, not that nothing matters, but that nothing matters much.

Is this an immoral philosophy at which I have arrived? I do not think so.

To know one's own limitations, so that one need no longer doubt; to have hopes that are strong but not consuming; to discover that one's weaknesses are measured only by another's strength—these are the satisfactions of incompetency.

To-day I am thirty, an admitted incompetent, and I am beginning to enjoy life again after ten years of futile discontent.