

"UTILITARIANISM."

We were once amused by seeing, in *Harpers' Weekly*, a cartoon which caricatured the work of our colleges. It depicted in a very suggestive manner the exit of a class of graduates. Each one was astride a Greek or Latin lexicon, to which was attached the appendages of a horse's head and feet. Each student wore, as a helmet, an open volume of some classical author; another volume served as a breastplate, and a third as a shield. At the foot of the page were these sarcastic, yet significant, words: "Commencement-Day. Students equipped for the battle of life."

This caricature, by a deservedly influential journal, expressively indicates the popular estimate of classical training. But the people in general are not alone in their distrust of this type of college work. The conflict between the partisans of the classics and those who contend for new methods in higher education, has drawn into the ranks of the latter an increasing number of educated men.

But, as in the case of Brutus at Philippi, there ever and anon rises before the mind of the ultra-advocate of classic lore, a phantom of hideous aspect and threaten-demeanor. This apparition, to him so full of fright, he dubs by the euphonious title of "utilitarianism." Now it is about time to demand an abatement of the gloomy prophecies respecting this modern individual. The reaction against classical education is irresistibly on the increase. The advocate of this relic of mediæval times can hardly prejudice his course in a worse manner than by obstinate and unyielding adherence to his idol. None but the most radical of our present educators will contend for an entire abolition of classical studies.

Then what signifies all this talk about the aforesaid nightmare? The tendency of modern ideas demands, as one of its requirements, a reformation in the system of higher education that has hitherto pre-

vailed. With changed ideas, new requirements come. Higher education has already fallen into partial disrepute, and it cannot long maintain that place in the public estimation which it is vitally important that it should hold, unless its old methods undergo a marked change.

A decadence in collegiate instruction is to be deplored. And yet there is a strong undercurrent in American life which tends to this end. It cannot be choked and the best way is obviously to diminish its strength. Less time must be spent on the classics, and more on the summarily treated topics of the latter part of a college course. Only a few fragments at best of the old authors are ever read, and the most defensible plea for the classics is their connection with the structure of the English language. Why waste one's time in gleaning an inaccurate idea of an oration of Cicero, and a few chapters of Herodotus, through the original, when, if that purpose is the chief end, all the orations of the former and the history of the latter may be more profitably read in the same time? If the age is "practical," why not let the fact be admitted, and courses of study shaped in accordance with its needs? The despised "business school" need not supplant the college, but there is here as elsewhere a golden mean to be observed.

LITERARY ENTERTAINMENTS.

Before another number of the *STUDENT* will appear, the excitement of Commencement exercises will be over, and the performers of the annual exhibitions of the Literary societies, will be resting upon their honors, confident of their past success. Hence we take this early opportunity, to make the usual suggestions and due announcements of these accustomed entertainments.

It seems that both societies have finally decided upon a programme that meets the approbation of all respectively. The usual number of performers are to appear