

# HESPERIAN STUDENT.

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## HOTELS.

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Late of the MARSH HOUSE.  
BROWNSVILLE, NEB.

### Lincoln Heb.

### Commercial Hotel.

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## Literary.

### THE TENDENCY OF MODERN SCIENCE.

*Timna Parker*  
"GIVE you joy oh sons of men,  
that Truth is altogether whole-  
some" is Plato's greeting to the age; an  
age imbued with the spirit of truth; when  
the air is full of a scepticism that rests  
not till transformed into belief; when the  
philosopher does not, as of old, put out  
his eyes, that he may know, but creates  
for himself new eyes, with which he  
reads the secrets of the universe.

The inductive method has made sci-  
ence the genius of the age. It is the leav-  
en that has given life to modern thought,  
the torch that has carried light and order  
where all was darkness and confusion.  
Man no longer affects humility in his  
study of the universe, nor regards it as a  
matter of exultation that he finds himself  
in a world of mystery, but aspires to see  
through the earth, to touch the stars and  
to discourse with all life. Science opens  
to his mind a boundless field of activity;  
for her stores are inexhaustible, and life  
is vastly richer from the treasures mind  
exercises from stubborn facts when  
touched by the philosopher's stone of  
thought. Science touches our life at  
every point, and with a magic hand  
transforms the forces of the universe into  
light and life. Philosophy is imbued with its  
spirit; all thought of the past, metaphys-  
ics, theology, literature and art are over-  
shadowed by this modern Titan. Man's  
mission is to generalize, to resist particu-  
lars; to see the past with the eyes of the  
present, and the present with the eyes of  
the past. The age is steeped in a science  
which is changing man's conception of  
the world and his destiny, and that has  
filled him with a fanaticism for veracity  
such as the world has never before seen.

The science of the day says,—"Why  
trouble ourselves about matters, of  
which, however important, we do know  
nothing and can know nothing?" Shall  
all speculation then be sacrificed to bare  
empiricism. The difficulties of meta-  
physics lie at the root of all science, says  
G. H. Lewes. That metaphysics has  
been barren, heretofore, is only too evi-  
dent, but it is not for science to fix arbi-  
trarily the limits of knowledge. Give to  
metaphysics a beating heart by infusing  
into it some of this new life which ani-  
mates all thought of the day and, in  
searching for the unknown that is yet  
knowable, we shall be vastly better, braver,  
and more industrious, than if we despaired  
of all knowing.

To-day all thought is rejected that does  
not bear the seal of this ruler of the  
times, yet science forgets that, with all  
her knowing, she has often gone no far-  
ther than the old philosophers, who  
sought within for a theory of the uni-  
verse. There is coming to be such an  
unquestioning faith in all that science  
proclaims, that we are in danger of leav-  
ing our thinking to be done by a few spec-  
ialists in science, and of losing the bene-  
fits of a healthy doubt. What has science  
done for man to deserve such confidence?  
She has freed him in one direction only to  
imprison him in another; she has placed  
the intellect in insurrection against the  
heart, and, while giving him continually  
a higher, nobler, and more perfect view  
of life, tends to crush him under the fa-

talities of physical forces. But Fate has  
been called unpenetrated causes; should  
not science then in her successful pene-  
tration of causes free man from the pris-  
on house of necessity? No, man in the  
height of his power, feels himself bound  
by inexorable law; and will only cease to  
be under paralyzed subjection to nature  
when, in viewing her, he adds to the tele-  
scope of the intellect the specterscope of  
the heart.

The divorce between the understanding  
and the heart has given birth to a marked  
uncertainty in the thought and actions of  
men. A Cromwell is not born in an age  
when doubtings and perplexities weaken  
and unnerve man. In a time when the  
subtlest and most universal problems  
are met by so many daring theories, opin-  
ions and beliefs are too transient to be  
crystallized into action; and that oscilla-  
tion which all progress demands, marks  
this as eminently a progressive age. Yet  
when the time comes for prompt and de-  
cisive action, will this halting between  
two opinions produce men equal to the  
exigencies of the times?

What answer does science give to the  
sphinx-like questions, What am I, Whence  
am I, Whither am I going? What ques-  
tions we have learned to ask! Yet  
though we have penetrated into the inner-  
most chambers of the pyramid of the past  
no answering hieroglyphic meets the eye.  
"Nor can baffled seers impart the secret  
of earth's laboring heart." Microscope,  
crucible, telescope are alike silent in the  
presence of this. And writing on the wall.  
The positive philosopher does not seek an  
interpretation but affects indifference to  
these questions, and, recognizing the law-  
less curiosity of much of modern science,  
aims to direct all thought towards the  
erection of an altar to Humanity. He re-  
jects all theology and metaphysics, as  
having outlived their usefulness, but the  
termination of his philosophy is in a the-  
ology and metaphysics. Positive philoso-  
phy, as a protest against the destructive  
tendency of the age may serve to  
check its one sided development, but as  
a destroyer of all the past it will fail to find  
a response in the hearts of men. The  
time indeed calls for some constructive  
effort that shall reconcile conduct with be-  
lief, but it is not sufficient to build it  
upon one man's conception of the needs  
of humanity.

Science attacks the conservative in  
thought, and that irreconcilable conflict  
between the existing and the ideal con-  
tinues with accumulated energy. But the  
new soon grows old, and the revolutionist  
is revolutionized, while all the vast theo-  
ries remain only as examples of higher  
generalizations. "Keep your mind open  
to the truth" is the motto of science;  
but scientists grow old and age is always  
averse to the new. Who then shall deter-  
mine truth, the great past or the ambi-  
tious present? That mind is the greatest,  
that can the most happily combine the two,  
as the springtime adds to the oak with its  
thousand years of growth new buds and  
blossoms. Science does not make a bigo-  
ted man less bigoted unless he can be able  
to see the truth with its accompanying  
falseness for man ever sees but half  
truths except in the perspective of years.

Mind has deserted the altars of form  
and sacrifices to the mechanical deity of  
the age. The Corliss engine usurps the  
Laocoon; *The Origin of Species* is sup-  
planting *Homer's Iliad*; the microscope  
and scalpel replace the palette and chisel;  
the poet mourns that "Philosophy would  
clip an angel's wings." All hail! to the

spirit of inquiry that freed man from  
servile admiration of a few great minds of  
the past and opened to him a perennial  
spring of life and beauty; but woe! to that  
spirit that forgets, as Emerson says, that  
the human heart is of more account than  
peering into microscopes, and is greater  
than can be measured by the pompous  
figures of the astronomer. Joy to the en-  
chantress that delivers man from the tyr-  
anny of nature, but away with that philoso-  
phy that would imprison him in an icy  
materialism. The minds of Homer and  
Newton meet at the summit and the grand  
truths in science surpass in beauty all  
that man can create in the imagination, so  
that one fully alive to this beauty need  
not lose all human sympathy by gazing  
into the heavens, or by companionship  
with dry bones, but will say with Seneca,  
"I count all that is human as part of my-  
self;" so the poet may well sing:

"In spite of all that time is bringing  
Treasures of truth and miracles of art,  
Beauty and love will keep the poet singing  
And song shall live—the science of the heart."

Comparative science is the magnetic  
current, that binds together the past and  
the present. Greek, Roman, Hindoo,  
Teuton become united in a common  
brotherhood for comparative science  
has discovered the lost genealogy of the  
European races; proud Roman and a  
thetic Greek no longer engross the atten-  
tion of mankind. This new star cul-  
ogued in the firmament of mind has e-  
verted mere idle curiosity of past insti-  
tutions into a noble zeal for the why  
wherefore of their existence, and histor-  
ical investigation is no longer a patch-  
work of rude guesses and false theories.  
To resist the deductions of the compar-  
ative method is to shut from the mind  
the grandest and broadest views of  
life and the universe. Why array mere o-  
pinion against the strongest of internal ev-  
idence; evidence that exalts and ennobles  
our ideas of man and nature, and that fills  
us with toleration, charity and sympathy  
for every movement of mankind towards  
truth, whether it be that of a Buddha in  
the historic East or a Socrates in the cul-  
tured West.

Carlyle has said, "The poorest day  
among us is the influx of two eternities."  
To-day carries the fruits of the past in its  
bosom and contains the germs of the fu-  
ture. Science has elevated this present to  
an eminence, such as no present has ever  
before known, and has made of this a con-  
ceited age; yet they tell us "that the mass  
of creatures and qualities are still hidden  
waiting like the enchanted princess for a  
human deliverer." Will science continue  
to be this deliverer? The specialist is  
doomed to solitary confinement with one  
absorbing thought, hence truth becomes  
distorted, and science is exposed to dangers  
from within. Again, she has been charged  
with hating the name of love and moral  
purpose, and, in so far as this is true, sci-  
ence will fail and decline, as has all  
thought that neglected any part of man's  
nature.

Give ear, oh science! to Plato when he  
says, "God invented sight, that, on survey-  
ing the circles of intelligence in the heav-  
ens, we might employ those of our own  
minds, and by imitating the uniform rev-  
olutions of divinity, set aright our own  
wanderings and blunders." Pursue, then,  
thy wondrous course oh science! Free  
man from the fatality of ignorance; teach  
him the sweet humanities; fill his life  
with noble and still nobler aims and reveal  
to him more and more of that holy trini-  
ty—matter, mind and spirit. E. P.