

cheerfully as possible. To sign petitions asking the reinstatement of the dismissed teacher is to set the opinion of the signer, who, ten to one, knows nothing of the real facts in the case, against the opinions and action of a body of men who are thoroughly interested, have much at stake, and whose business it is to know what should be done to improve the efficiency of the University. Partizanship can do no good around an institution of learning.

AMONG the matters discussed by metropolitan papers just now is the decline of the lecture. 'Tis said that the demand for speakers of this class has steadily been going down for years, until at the present time the best reputations will draw but a small audience, and the attraction is then not the lecture but the personality of the man. This in connection with the undoubted "decline in oratory" over which the elocutionists so copiously weep, ought to discourage the study of declamation among collegians. Elocution should not be entirely neglected, however. It deserves a secondary place. The clear forcible writer and thinker will be more of a "success" in life than the brainless orator, popular report to the contrary notwithstanding. The orator, once the moving power in Congress, has been relegated to the stump and the justice court, a fact that should be kept in mind by the ambitious young man who hopes to gain distinction through a few terms of elocutionary drill. One of the duties of the teacher of that branch of college work ought to be to impress upon the student an idea of the relative importance of thought, composition and delivery. The best results will undoubtedly be secured by the new arrangement soon to be made by the University. Results will be looked for with interest.

MANY students look into the "dim vista" of the future and try to decide what they are going to make of themselves,—that is, in what position they can be of the greatest benefit to humanity and so on. It is notorious that in our late war, however patriotic a man might be, he always thought that he could be more serviceable as an officer than as a private. So it is with the student. He almost always has a magnified idea of the place he is to fill in this world; he thinks he ought to do something that will make him immortal in the minds of men; he is not content to think that possibly many will never hear his name. And so he plans for his work. He will be a great man of course; and how? He must be famed as a writer. He will write not only novels, but will also win a name as a moral philosopher, a statesman or a—well, there is no field in which this embryo greatness does not aspire to achieve a name. All this

is perhaps an exaggerated picture of what comes to almost every student at some time or other in his college course, when the vast field of learning begins to open before him. It is excruciating to think that he must ever place bounds to his achievements. Most recover in due course of time, as from the measles, but there is always a certain element of danger that the attack will prove fatal and the sufferer, aspiring to greatness in everything, will achieve success in nothing. The sooner one concludes that mere intelligence in many things, achievement in one thing alone is for him, the better it is. And, more than this, one must learn that the unknown ones who have contributed their share to an indivisible whole of influence or result are to have no less honor than he who has been privileged to stamp his work with his name.

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#### MISCELLANY.

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It seems to be the style now among story writers to introduce chaos, instead of harmony, at the finale. This is commendable perhaps as a change but it is doubtful whether it would be good as steady diet. Take Howell's *A Modern Instance* for example. In this the hero steadily grows in brutality and selfishness of the most revolting kind. The heroine, through despair, is narrowed and morally dwarfed. Like Niobe, she is transformed into stone. Halleck is disgusting on account of his morbid sentimentality, and being so womanishly feeble can extort no sympathy from us. One feels like asking him "what is the use of being a fool?"

We suppose there are many modern instances like this, but it is hardly worth the while to give exclusive attention to them. If novelists can find none but brutes, fools and weaklings to describe to us, perhaps they had better be silent. We have enough hell to enact in our actual life, so we do not crave intensified pictures of it from writers. It is not probable that all the nobler traits of human character have departed from the face of the earth. There are still a few, who lead unselfish lives, and restore our faith in the possibilities of man. We prefer to hear of these than the Bartley Hubbards.

*A Modern Instance*, though it may be a great success as a realistic novel, its strength and truth unquestionable, yet it is, to say the least, disagreeable. Its characters are vivid and life-like, but so repulsive that we do not find any enjoyment in their society, but leave them with feelings of disgust.

Applying the German test, "what can it teach," we fear it would be nothing but what we ought to unlearn again. It is the doctrine of pessimism most admirably concretized. It is no more commendable than the Byronic wail, which is so universally ridiculed.

Whether it is time to renounce ideals and accept the realism of this novel, may be disputed. We have advanced a long ways in this nineteenth century, but not yet beyond human endeavor and upward striving. We can still conceive of a higher existence than our present. Until this is no longer true, we wish to avoid pessimistic novels.

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The appearance of Keene in *Hamlet* is the recent theatrical event in Lincoln. The HESPERIAN feels called upon to join the army of critics and say the "last word," justifying herself in this venture upon the vast fund of experience gathered by