

UNIVERSITY TRAINING.

The underlying purpose of education should be to prepare one for the activities of life, to teach how to live, not in a narrow, but in a broad and liberal conception of the word. What is it that most contributes to this end? Or what knowledge is of the most worth? Herbert Spencer says it is that knowledge which directly contributes to self-protection and self-maintenance. The accumulation of those objects essential to self-protection and preservation precedes then, the acquisition of that which charms only the aesthetic nature. It is a positive evil to cultivate a desire and an undue appreciation of pleasurable objects unless with it is obtained that knowledge which will make their acquisition possible and afford opportunities for their enjoyment. One must be fed, clothed, and housed before he may enjoy the beauties of art. Moments of leisure are essential for the pursuit of those objects and studies which develop the finer nature and this leisure is only possible after the accumulation of the necessities.

Therefore that knowledge, which fits one for the industrial activities of life, for some one of

The Relative Value. the many departments of the world's commerce or business, is of primary importance. While that which prepares one for the enjoyment of those things which are obtainable only after a successful business or commercial career, is secondary. Judged by this standard have our colleges and universities trained men "how to live?" Is it not true, to use a homely figure, that we have placed the cart before the horse? Have we not in the arrangement of our college curricula placed secondary subjects before primary ones? Have we not, as suggested by Spencer, sacrificed the useful to the ornamental? Have we not clothed our minds as the savage clothes his body, more for decoration than comfort or use?

Let it be admitted that many subjects contribute to give one polish and elegance of manners, but that does not justify their acquisition at the expense of things of vital importance. "As they occupy the leisure part of life," to use the terse language of Spencer, "so should they occupy the leisure part of education."

It has become a trite saying among business men that, "The college education unfits rather

Business Life. than fits men for affairs." In commercial life, rigid discipline, thoroughness, and careful attention to details are required. The training afforded in many of our universities makes impossible the acquisition of these habits so essential to business success. The student is given too much liberty, too little realizes the restraint of discipline and is thus encouraged in the dangerous theory that he

has more to do with the management of the institution than the faculty and regents. Possessed of this very erroneous idea he enters the business world, not so much with the idea of working for his employer as to act as a confidential adviser and show him how to run his business. And it frequently happens, that too much freedom is permitted in the choice of subjects and in attendance at lectures. As a consequence the student takes those things he likes best without regard to their value. And often his likes are determined by the ease with which the subject may be mastered. In the event of an error in judgment and the selection of something more difficult than intended he is apt to make a lightning change to a subject more promising in point of facility of acquirement. He is thus encouraged in habits of vacillation, difficult to overcome. He leaves the university with a little knowledge about each of a variety of subjects but with complete learning in none.

Mr. Chas. R. Flint, who is recognized as one of the foremost industrial leaders

College Men. of the country, has had wide experience in the employment of young men from the universities. For this reason his opinion on this subject is of special weight. In a recent paper, read before the Outlook Club of Mont Clair, New Jersey, he discussed the subject: "Is a College Education Advisable as a Preparation for a Business Career?" and, among other, made this interesting observation:

"While much depends on the youth, much depends on the college. In some colleges, judging from the young men who enter our offices, I infer that the discipline is lax. Many of our educational institutions seem to have gotten too far away from the system of discipline that does so much for the cadets at Annapolis and West Point. I am informed that in many of our colleges a young man may study what he wishes, may attend lectures when he likes, and may play when he pleases. He spends his time under conditions that present the most violent contrast to the conditions he must face when he enters business. In the counting-room punctuality and application are demanded as matters, not of election, but of necessity. The shock that comes with the transition from the easy-going methods of college life to the stern rules of a business office, is very apt to prove irksome and unendurable. It too often breeds discontent, and kills interest. The young man finds he cannot do as he elects, but must do as he is told. He pays sharply the penalty for a system, under which, as President Gilman of Johns Hopkins, says, he is permitted in college 'to float on, avoiding difficulty as a rule, instead of mastering it, and attending to the performance of duties in a perfunctory way, but not enjoying his intellectual opportunities half as much as he does his companionship with his comrades.'"

During the early years of higher edu-

cation in America the colleges were largely training schools for the ministry. The course of study related to those subjects presumed to be of special interest and value to the clergy. As the professions of law and medicine developed and took higher rank they proved peculiarly attractive to young men and a majority of college graduates entered professional life. Now the overcrowded condition of the so-called professions has caused young men of ambition and energy to seek successful careers in other lines.

The modern era of consolidation, the bringing together of vast capitals under a single management, increases

Consolidation. rather than lessens the demand for intelligent young men. As industrial organization progresses and becomes more complex the demand for trained minds is enlarged and this increased demand for brains should increase the demand for the product of our universities, that is, providing the product is properly finished and put upon the market in an attractive and useful form. The mind must be trained and not untrained for commercial pursuits. The stern question put to the college graduate by the business man is not, what have you studied? but what can you do? As the faculties of our universities yielded to the supposed requirements of the professions in training young men for professional life, so now they should give heed to the necessities of the commercial world in the preparation of young men for industrial activities.

Our commerce is no longer confined to the boundaries of our own country but is world wide.

Commerce. Many industrial enterprises organized in the United States are represented in nearly every civilized country. This means increased opportunities for employment as managers or clerks in foreign territory. But for these positions a knowledge of the language of the country is essential. How few of the young men from our universities are competent for this work? Simply because German, French, Italian and Spanish are studied as an accomplishment rather than for use. In our great manufacturing establishments chemists and other scientific specialists are required. How illy prepared the average graduate is for these positions those in charge of such enterprises can testify. Would it materially detract from the merit of chemistry as a brain refiner, if, in addition to the aesthetic purpose, it were taught with a view to its practical application in the laboratories of the business world? This is the problem confronting our colleges and universities. It is a hopeful sign that many of them are adjusting themselves to the new condition, getting away from the ancient idea of a "showy" education and trying to meet the practical requirements of everyday life—to clothe rather than adorn the mind.