

Our Betters

intend to follow learned professions, to whom indeed the academic study during these years is absolutely essential; but I imagine that there are many callings to which the lengthy sojourn in a University is absolutely disadvantageous, and that the acquisition of a mere social betterment is frequently ruinous to the initiative of those concerned.

You may be sure that when you hear the same complaint uttered by so many independent persons, in so many sections of the community, there is something wrong in the system, and that a revolution is at hand. It is another case of too much reverence for buttons.

The great book from which to learn is the book of life; the great university is the storm and stress of the world. A man's education should depend on his individual job. A sailor, for instance, is none the worse for not having a University education: there is no class of men that is more keenly intelligent in grappling with the essentials of life than are sailors. Why? Because they are in touch with Nature. They have to deal with the elements; they are eye to eye with the realities of Nature, and consequently they are more indifferent than most to the little socialities which vex the souls of those whose surroundings are more artificial. How little all these little social bickerings seem when we are in