

An ancient philosopher, when asked what things boys should learn, made the curt reply: "What they need most when they become men." This is plain common sense. Education, like all human enterprises, to be successful must have a well directed aim—a definitely understood purpose. A higher educational institution cannot hope to be either enduring or efficient, which does not place in its prospective usefulness its principle of life and progress. This is the inexorable verdict of the past. The knowledge imparted in the great abodes of learning anticipated the educational needs of times and places, and was moulded in character and determined in extent, by the circumstances under which it expanded into peculiar form. As a consequence, in every age from the time of the Greek Lyceum—Athens was then the University of the world—or of the not less pretentious schools of the Ptolemies of Egypt, down to the present, we find the question of higher education regulate itself on the commercial principle of supply and demand. Schools of general knowledge both created the demand, and adjusted the supply. In reading the luminous history of the *Studia Universalia* of the Middle Ages, or, of the more modern Universities of Europe, one cannot fail to be convinced, that they have invariably been modified in detail by the circumstances, and marked by the peculiarities, because they aimed to supply the needs, of the ages to which they severally belonged.

Ours is eminently a utilitarian age. Few of our young men have the inclination, even if they have the time and means, to apply themselves to the higher grades of literature and science, from the mere love of learning. They must see their account in what they study. *Sublatis studiorum præmiis, et studia ipsa cito peritura.* In the circumstances of our country, a course of studies, to be attractive, must be useful.

Here I shall define in what sense a course of Academic studies carries with it in my mind the attribute of *utility*. In the first place, I regard as useful every intellectual acquisition, which is a means to something beyond itself, is a preparation for some art or profession, or turns out from the retreats of a College, young men in a condition to apply themselves to the business and affairs of the world. In the second place, the value of an intellectual attainment must not be measured solely by the degree of its subserviency to a special future calling. I do not mean to say that no education is or can be useful, which does not prepare subjects for some profession or mechanical