

particular good. Even our universities, or at least some of their weaker representatives, have shown a tendency to view one another as rivals, not as fellow-workers in a common cause; and in some cases city and university have confronted each other as antagonists, as when, but the other day, our Provincial University was under the necessity of wresting from the wealthy city for which it has done so much a sum which might well have been surrendered spontaneously, and even doubled or trebled. This weak grasp of the idea of unity is, no doubt, due to a variety of causes; but it is, I think, to be referred partly to our inadequate conception of the importance of the higher culture which a university should seek to foster, and an inadequate conception of the special function which the university, as a member of the social organism, is called upon to discharge. Broadly speaking, the university is the mediator between the past and the future, the life of thought and the life of action, the individual and the race. There is, and can be, no "self-made" man. Any one left to struggle single-handed with the forces of nature would soon find nature all too powerful for him. Without association and mutual helpfulness there could be no progress in the arts or in civilization. So, without our schools and colleges we should all be condemned to a narrow, monotonous existence, unilluminated by any higher interests, and all scientific discovery, artistic creation and deeper comprehension of life would be cut off at their source. How stagnant would that society be in which each child had laboriously to discover for itself those elementary truths, which it now learns without effort and almost without consciousness! It would be, as Plato says, a "society of pigs." I by no means say that even the highest culture may not be obtained outside of our universities, but it is safe to say, that such culture will be won only by a useless expenditure of energy. I am aware that many men of genius have owed nothing to the direct teaching of the universities. Genius surmounts all obstacles, and is a law to itself. But I think it is wise in most of us not to handicap ourselves at the start, but rather to assume that, having no claim to the rank of genius, we have no claim to be a law to ourselves. The universities are, or ought to be, the custodians and interpreters of the best thought of all time. The narrow experience of the individual needs to be supplemented by the wider experience of the race, and only he who has taken pains to enter sympathetically into this wider experience can hope to live a complete life. By a study of the masterpieces of literature, a man comes to see the world "with other, larger eyes;" in history he learns how nationalities take shape, flourish and decay; in the record of philosophic systems he is carried back to the insignificant springs of human thought and forward as they deepen and widen into a noble river that flows on with ever-increasing volume and energy; in the study of science he makes acquaintance with those eternal laws which make the infinite mind visible to us. The result of this wide culture, if it is pursued in the right spirit, is to make a man look at things from a large and unselfish point of view, and to call up in him a passion for all that makes for a higher, national, social and individual life. The work of the university

is not simply to supply men with useful information, or to provide them with a durable intellectual gymnastic, or even to make them skilful in their vocation. A university of the proper type cannot fail to do all these things, but it will do so because it aims at something more and higher. Just as it has been said that to seek for pleasure is the surest way not to find it, so we may say, that a university that merely aims at being a sort of living encyclopædia, or seeks to prepare men for a special vocation, or tries to discipline their minds to strength and pliancy, will fail, even in this limited object. The aim of the university is to produce noble, intelligent, unselfish men, and, if it fails in that, it has failed of its high vocation. The true ideal is to lift men to an altitude where they shall be able to contemplate human life as an organic whole, ruled by the idea of order and law, and where they shall be moved, as by a Divine constraint, to consecrate their life to the common weal. With this comprehensive idea and this far-reaching enthusiasm, the true university will inspire all who submit to its influence; and for the realization of such a university, almost no labor and no sacrifice can be too great. But I must try to put these general statements into a more concrete shape. Perhaps this cannot be better done than by reminding you of the life of a typical student, "who followed his star" with a faithful persistence that enabled him to enrich the world with the undying products of his genius. I purposely select a man of the first rank, because I desire to emphasize the truth that even with the highest natural endowment a man can do little for his kind without much hard labor. I refer to the great poet, who has expressed in what Tieck calls "mystic, unfathomable song" the whole spirit of the middle ages. Why does Dante continue to exercise over the best minds so powerful a fascination? Is it not because, obsolete as are the forms into which his thought is thrown, his conception of life is so true in its essence that it affords the richest spiritual nourishment? We reject the imagery by which, in the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*, the three ideas of retribution, repentance and blessedness are bodied forth; but, after all reservations, the truth remains untouched, that evil brings its own punishment, and can be expiated only by a repentance that leads to a new birth. Thus Dante built upon a foundation that stands firm for all time, high above the ebb and flow of our changing creeds; and his great poem rises before us as a stately world-wide edifice. He was no "idle singer of an empty day," no manufacturer of smooth and polished conceits, but a man of ideas, who "saw life steadily and saw it whole." He was a thinker of wide and varied experience, who took his work seriously, and was determined to see things as in reality they are. "This book of mine," he says, "has made me learn for many years." Boccaccio tells us that, in his boyhood, Dante was a hard student, and had had the most intimate acquaintance with all the famous poets. "Taken by the sweetness of knowing the truth of the things concealed in heaven, and finding no other pleasure dearer to him in life, he left all other worldly care and gave himself to this alone."

(Concluded in next issue.)