

and have been gained, without the help of colleges. The greatest inventors in the useful arts, not a few of the greatest geniuses in science and literature, some of our ablest and most renowned public men, were not brought up in colleges. Franklin, Bowditch, Shakspeare, who stands alone, and Washington, another who stands alone,—these, and a thousand others who have been lights and guides of the world, were not brought up in colleges. They were what are called self-educated men,—self-made, self-taught.

Without meaning to derogate, in the smallest degree, from the merits or actual attainments of such men, without meaning to question that their merits were greater in proportion as their advantages were less, I cannot help observing that these terms, *self-educated*, *self-made*, *self-taught*, are vague and loose expressions, which can hardly be interpreted to the letter. How can a man teach himself what he does not already know? Strictly speaking, nobody is self-educated, self-made, self-taught. We are all born in a state of entire dependence on others; it is from others that we learn, not only how to read and write, but also how to speak, how to think, how to walk. Home is a school; the church is a school; society is a school. Hence there is not a so-called self-educated, self-made, self-taught man among them all, who does not owe much the largest part of what he knows or believes to the teaching of others. The only real distinction between men in this respect would seem to be, that some have better teachers than others, and have them longer.

The principal recommendation of the self-made scholar is, that he has to exert his own mind in every step he takes, and this can hardly fail to improve his mind. But the same must also be true of the pupil of the best teachers, if he aspires to eminence. The object aimed at in a university education is not to lessen the amount of intellectual labor, but to make that labor more effective. The earnest and ambitious student is supplied with the best facilities for thoroughly mastering what is already known in a particular department, in order that, with the same amount of labor, he may be able to reach, much sooner, than he otherwise would, the existing boundary of human discovery in that direction, and so be in a condition, while yet in the prime of life, to enter upon really original investigations. Besides, we are not now speaking of what is good for the individual, for his self-improvement, but of what is good for the public. The public gains nothing directly from having the same truths re-discovered, or the same processes re-invented, over and over again. What adds to the intellectual wealth of the community, and ultimately to its progress in other respects, is the actual enlargement of the boundaries of human knowledge. Hence the public good requires that the acquisition of what is already known should be simplified and expedited by the help of books and the living teacher; a necessity which must be more and more felt, because the progress of science is continually lengthening the way to be gone over, before the point of proper original discovery is reached.

There are also two other advantages incidental to a collegiate education compared with private or self-education, which are of public importance. In the first place, the habit of measuring one's self with equals, and looking up to teachers, begets a spirit of concession and deference. Who, in reading the lives of great men, has never been struck with the tender respect, the almost filial regard, with which they are accustomed to look back on some favorite teacher, speaking of him, and bearing themselves in his presence, to the last, as if the old relation were, for the moment, renewed, and they were his pupils still. Men of a timid or morbid nature, like Cowper, may complain and lament over the rudenesses, the cruelties, and other not unfrequent abuses, pertaining to the society of students collected together in large numbers. To such natures, such society may not be well suited; but to the majority of minds it is found to be a most effectual antidote to infirmities and vices which infest the wealthy and educated classes; such as effeminacy, affectation, and self-conceit. Though there are pedants and charlatans in plenty, it is a mistake to suppose that colleges make them; on the contrary, they do more than all other causes put together to unmake them. In colleges themselves, this sort of pretence cannot live under the storm of merciless ridicule it incurs. And this is not all. By multiplying the number of really learned men, and thus elevating the standard of public opinion, colleges make it less and less possible for the mere pretender to escape public exposure and contempt.

Another favorable circumstance pertaining to a liberal and systematic education is, that the student is neither expected nor tempted to make up his mind definitively on any particular subject, much less to commit himself to it, or act upon it, until he has completed his survey of the whole field of human knowledge. Of course this survey must be general, and in parts quite superficial, but sufficient, nevertheless, to secure a deliberation and breadth of view which will do much to save him from hasty and one-sided judgments. To this we are to look, as it seems to me, for one of the best correctives of an evil which threatens the order and stability, I might almost say the very existence, of modern society. I am no alarmist; still, I suppose all will agree that the boasted civilization of the nineteenth century is beginning to run out into follies and extravagancies, which, to say the least, were not expected. Crude and sometimes noxious theories in science, politics, and

religion, schemes of reform which unsettle everything and settle nothing, popular beliefs every whit as absurd as witchcraft, and not supported by half so much testimony, and which, fifty years ago, would not have been able to obtain even so much as a hearing, are now agitating the community everywhere. And why? We must not think to trace this state of things to mere ignorance on the part of the people; for mere ignorance is slow and dull to all changes, whether for the better or the worse. And besides, the primary education of the people was never attended to more generally or more successfully than now; nay, never so generally or so successfully. And even as regards the leaders of the people, who are chiefly responsible for these erratic movements, it is not necessary to question their natural ability even as leaders, nor, for the most part, their good intentions. They have probably thought a great deal on the question at issue, and understand it perhaps in some of its bearings better than most persons; their error consists in refusing or neglecting to consider it in all its bearings. Very probably they have a natural and just sense of the evil to be removed, but their defect consists in this: they do not comprehend the magnitude of the difficulty; they have not a full view of all that relates to the question. Though not, perhaps, deficient in sense, they want what Locke calls "large, sound, round-about sense;" as a means of obtaining which, they also need a "large, sound, round-about" education.

The radical difficulty in modern society may be expressed, as it seems to me, in two words,—*intellectual anarchy*; a difficulty not likely to be overcome or essentially reduced by merely attending to and improving common schools. Indeed, there is doubtless a sense in which it may be said that the favor and success of common schools have contributed to the anarchy here complained of, and furnished the best reason and excuse for it, by lessening the difference between common education, which is the property and right of all, and the highest education, which in the nature of things, is accessible to but few. Some are so convinced of this, and withal so alarmed at the tendency of events, as to be more than half inclined to wish back the good old times when the multitude were content to believe as they were told, and do as they were bid. But, thanks to God, this will not, cannot be; neither is it necessary as a means of restoring a proper order and subordination in the intellectual world. Extend and improve common schools to the utmost: it is a necessary condition of self-government; it is the sole guarantee of popular liberty; constituted as modern society is, it may almost be said to mark the distinction between a standing and a falling commonwealth; it is the last hope of mankind; and no evil, no inconvenience, will grow out of it, provided only that you at the same time attend to and improve colleges and universities in the same proportion. Then the difference between common education and scientific and professional education will remain as great as ever, which is all that is required: for it is on this recognized and felt superiority, that all legitimate, all true authority is built.

The learned professions complain, that they are gradually losing their influence over the public mind; not merely on general subjects, but also on those to which they are especially devoted. To a certain extent this is probably true, but what is the remedy? Influence is not a thing to be had for asking, or sued for as a charity, or enforced as a matter of police; homage, to be real, must be spontaneous. And here I need hardly say, that the people have no interest in being misled. If they follow false lights, it must be because the true lights do not shine out so clearly and distinctly, but that honest minds may mistake one for the other. Let the true light shine out more clearly and distinctly; there is no other way. If the learned professions are ever to regain their ascendancy, each in its appropriate sphere, it will not be by the spell of names or forms, nor yet by that of caste or social position; it will be by obvious and incontestable evidence of superiority. I do not mean the superiority of a few individuals in each profession; this is an end which is sufficiently secured by natural genius, and what is called self-culture; the profession itself must be raised, which can only be done by raising the standard of professional education.

In saying this, I do but say what the heads of all the professions feel and acknowledge. Everywhere they are awake to the public need; nay, more, are doing what they can to supply it. Considerate men of all parties are beginning to see, that a wise conservatism and a wise reform go together. If we would keep things as they are, if we would retain the old adjustments of society, we must not only accept, but provide for, those changes which the progress of society demands. In order to maintain the natural and necessary balance among the great social agencies, if we would go back in some things, we must go back in all; if we would go forward in some things, we must go forward in all. And hence it follows, that the impulse which has been given, and so nobly given, to primary education, only makes it the more indispensable as a condition of social order, and even as a matter of pure conservatism, that a corresponding impulse should be given to secondary or higher education.

But the question will here be raised, Are colleges and universities the fittest places for the acquisition of this secondary and higher education?

What are colleges and universities? I purposely waive the logomachy