


+Objections.+

 short time since I read in the columns of your paper an article under the name, "Culture Demanded of Modern Life," in which the writer in a most peremptory manner gave his opinion on the requirements of culture demanded at the present time. I beg leave to appropriate a small space in which to insert a few objections to the article published last month.

The writer opens his essay with the remark that "America in this age is intensely practical, and requires a culture on the part of its inhabitants equally practical." We would venture, in reply, the question—In proportion to the advancement in every department of education and social life, is the practical element greater than in former years? Owing to the progress in Science and Philosophy subjects, which a few years ago were far off dreams to the bulk of humanity, if ever thought of, are now brought within the range of the people. In every way the intellectual standard is higher than in preceding ages, but we doubt if it be more practical. It will not be denied that the highest aim of the majority of American citizens at the present day is—how great an amount of "filthy lucre" can be laid by in "Life's short hour," so that when they catch the vital breath and die, their names will be handed down to posterity; not for the amount of good done or noble thoughts left to influence humanity for good, but the large check their names are good for at the bank! This may be acknowledged by many to be practical, but they will hardly attach the word "culture" to it.

One great function of Science at the present day is to lighten labor—"Man is a being of action," but not a being for menial labor. Nor is this disparaging—the less time spent in manual labor leaves more to the enlargement of the intellectual faculties, but to affirm that the highest reason for which knowledge is acquired is its "useful application," is going to an extreme.

The writer acknowledges that the adherents of the opposite view of education hold that "mental discipline is the true object of a higher culture." If he does not accept this as the one great reason for higher culture, the writer certainly advances no other unless he places "useful application" above "mental discipline," or give "Night" more homage than "Day." What could be a higher object of culture than that which trains the intellectual faculties? To quicken and strengthen the reasoning power is the height of education. We want in this world thinkers who can advance an individual line of thought and not blindly follow where others lead. What is better able to accomplish this than the study of mathematics. The writer scornfully speaks of a course in the dead languages taken up for anything other than a critical study, and tells us that "the young classical student is detached from all his early mental connections—expatriated to Greece and Rome for a course of years, and becomes charged with antiquated ideas, etc., etc." Does he mean to infer that while taking a classical course the student is a hermit? If so we will not attempt to refute the statement, but this is not the case with the modern students of our knowledge. Surrounded by active life in which he must be active—he could not if he would, separate himself from modern refinements. He thus has the advantages of both schools. In the midst of modern thought he studies ancient, will not the two unite and produce that which is higher and nobler? The writer is on shifting sand when he takes the stand that where no perceived result comes from the acquiring of certain subjects that "time has been irretrievably lost and power irrecoverably wasted." Nothing once acquired is ever lost. Unconsciously it will produce effects and the mind will be enriched and elevated so that it can grasp higher thoughts with greater ease.

We agree in that "the most priceless of all things is mental power," but would ask a proof that this is accomplished by means of Science. Do the great thinkers