

their niche in the intellectual life. Talking with a famous professor some years ago about his wish to lower the requirements for admission to college, I expressed the fear that, with lower requirements, would come a throng of idlers. "That," said he, with a paradoxical wisdom for which I am not yet ripe, but which I have at last begun to understand, "That is precisely what I should like to see. I should like to see an increase in the number of these idle persons: for here are set before them higher ideals than are set before them elsewhere." "People talk of evil in college," says a graduate with business experience in New York. "I tell you, college is a place of white purity when compared with the New York business world." In the withdrawal of the veriest idler from the hope of the vision lies a chance of injury, and this chance, small as it is, may fill the horizon of father or mother. "Dismissal from college means certain ruin." Hence these tears of strong men, these "fits of the asterisks" in undisciplined women. Hence those variations in the father who first proclaims that his son must stand near the head of his class or go; next, when that son has fallen short of the least that the college demands, dlags out every argument good or bad for keeping him till the end,—and at last almost leaps for joy if he is warranted auction-sound on Commencement Day. Recognition of the possible disaster in withdrawal may be blended, in a parent's mind, with desire to avoid personal mortification; but it is a strong motive for all that, and a worthy one. It makes an administrative officer cautious in action, and enables him to listen with sympathy to pleading for which a careless outsider may find no excuse.

Yet the chance is too small, and the risk is too great. The shock of adversity when the doors of the college close, the immediate need of hard, low paid work in a cold world where

there is no success without industry, may be the one saving thing after the failure of the academic invitation to duty with no palpable relation of industry to success. Compulsory labor with a definite object may at length bring voluntary labor and that enjoyment of work without which nobody who is so fortunate as to work for his living through most of his waking hours can be efficient or happy, and exclusion from college is sometimes the awakening from dull and selfish immaturity into responsible manhood. No one is entitled to a college education who does not earn the right from day to day by strenuous or by enthusiastic life; college is for the ablest and the best; yet, as some fathers send their least efficient sons into the ministry, as some men who have failed in divers walks of life seek a refuge as teachers of literature, so, and with results almost as deplorable, some people send their boys to college because nobody can see in those boys a single sign of usefulness.

Wise fathers and mothers, when they visit a college officer, are commonly concerned with their sons' courses of study; their mission is rarely sorrowful. The parents of troublesome students are not, as a rule, wise. Yet some fathers and mothers whose sons have gone wrong stand out clearly in my mind as almost everything a parent should be,—asking no favors, seeing clearly and promptly the distinction between the honorable and the dishonorable, and the distinction between the honorable and the half honorable, holding the standard high for their sons and for themselves in every relation of life, women struggling in silent loyalty to free their children from the iniquity of the fathers, and men as tender as women and as true as truth itself. What they are to their sons we can only guess; to an administrative officer, they are "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."—*The Atlantic Monthly*.