

not a home for incurables or a limbo for the dull and inefficient. Moreover, as a Western father observed, "It does not pay to spend two thousand dollars on a two-dollar boy." Though a firm believer in college training as the supreme intellectual privilege of youth, I am convinced that the salvation of some young men (for the practical purposes of this present world) is in taking them out of college and giving them long and inevitable hours in some office or factory. I do not mean that all success in college belongs to the good scholars; for many a youth who stands low in his classes gets incalculable benefit from his college course. He may miss that important part of training which consists in his doing the thing for which he is booked; but he does something for which—through a natural mistake, if it is a mistake—he thinks he is booked—he leads an active life, of subordination here, of leadership there, of responsibility everywhere; and he leads it in a community where learning and culture abound, where ideals are noble, and where courage and truth are rated high. Such a young man, if he barely scrapes through (provided he scrapes through honestly), has wasted neither his father's money nor his own time. Even the desultory reader who contracts, at the expense of his studies, what has been called "the library habit," may become the glory of his Alma Mater. It is the weak-kneed dawdler who ought to go, the youth whose body and mind are wasted away in bad hours and bad company, and whose sense of truth grows dimmer and dimmer in the smoke of his cigarettes; yet it is precisely this youth who, through mere inertia, is hardest to move, who seems glued to the university, whose father is helpless before his future, and whose relatives contend that, since he is no man's enemy but his own, he should be allowed to stay in the college so long as his father will pay his tuition fee,—as if a college

were a public conveyance wherein anybody that pays his fare may abide "unless personally obnoxious," or a hotel where anybody that pays enough may lie in bed and have all the good things sent up to him. No college—certainly no college with an elective system, which presupposes a youth's interest in his own intellectual welfare—can afford to keep such as he. Nor can he afford to be kept. One of the first aims of college life is increase of power: be he scholar or athlete, the sound undergraduate learns to meet difficulties; "stumbling blocks," in the words of an admirable preacher, "become stepping stones." It is a shortsighted kindness that keeps in college (with its priceless opportunities for growth and its corresponding opportunities for degeneration) a youth who lies down in front of his stumbling-blocks in the vague hope that by and by the authorities will cart them away.

The only substitute for the power that surmounts obstacles is the enthusiasm before which obstacles disappear; and sometimes a student who has never got hold of his work finds on a sudden that it has got hold of him. Here, I admit, is the loafer's argument (or rather, the loafer's father's argument) for the loafer's continuance at a seat of learning. In any loafer may lurk the latent enthusiast: no man's offering is so hopelessly non-combustible that it never can be touched by the fire from heaven; and few places are more exposed to the sparks than our best colleges. Some new study,—chosen; it may be, as a "snap,"—some magnetic teacher, some classmate's sister, may, in the twinkling of an eye, create and establish an object in a hitherto aimless life, and an enthusiasm which makes light of work,—just as the call to arms has transmuted many an idler into a man. Some idlers whose regeneration is less sudden are idlers at college chiefly because they have yet to adjust themselves to an elective system, have yet to find