

science alone—the Faculty of Arts, it is called—the real value of the studies is so far from being obvious to the outside observer that some will not even take the trouble to make careful inquiry concerning it, simply denying its existence. The value of a university education, by which is always meant training in the Faculty of Arts, is to them a matter of disbelief. Now, I have no intention, on the present occasion, of entering upon the general question here involved. It is not necessary. The value is widely acknowledged, especially on this continent, in parts of which the name “University” seems to be regarded as having a magical influence, capable of converting inferior schools into wonder-working engines of intellectual cultivation, or of dazzling the public into that belief. The topic, however, I have selected is closely akin to this, of the same character, in fact. I have chosen it with the special object of encouraging you in your onward course by the cheering thought that you have spent your time here profitably and have taken the best means of equipping yourselves intellectually for the battle of life. I do this with the greater pleasure, because of the unusual proportion of those among you who belong to the professional faculties, not less than one-third of your whole number belonging to the faculty of medicine alone. You therefore have given a very positive and most costly proof of your belief that the thorough study of literature and science, that is, of arts, is a valuable training for professional life, even if nothing higher be considered. But this can be little more at the present time, than belief on your part. You are, of course, conscious that you have learned a great deal in your course, that your store of knowledge is largely increased, but of the development of your mental powers you cannot be so certain. You cannot compare these powers as they are now with what they would have been without the discipline they have passed through.

A direct comparison with other men by means of any suitable test would prove nothing, because the element of natural ability enters so largely into such a test that it would be impossible by a mere comparison of individuals to say how much was due to one cause and how much to another. A comparison, however, on a large scale, taking in many thousands of cases, and observing the average result, would lead us to some sure conclusion. And it is really on a comparison of this kind, though made in the roughest manner, that the general belief in the advantages of a university education is founded, namely, by a comparison of the careers in after life of university graduates with those of others not so trained. Consider an analogous case. Suppose we were to take a small number of men, equal, as nearly as possible, in strength, activity and endurance, choosing them by satisfactory tests; and divide them into two sets, equal in number. Imagine that they are training for a boat race and that we wish to ascertain, first, what is the best kind of food for the purpose, and secondly, what is the best drill. It is obvious that if we give them both exactly the same drill, while they have different systems of diet, the result of the race will help us to decide on the best kind of food. On the other hand, two different systems of drill can be fairly compared only when the food is exactly the same. If the results of a large number of boat