

### The Advantages of Great Cities for Professional Study.

In choosing a place of education, whether college or professional school, the advantages of different ones are so evenly balanced, that the decision, in most cases, is made from purely accidental reasons. Intrinsicly, there is not a very wide difference among our colleges and our professional schools. With rare exceptions, they are modelled on the same plans, pervaded by the same ideas, officered by the same class of men, and turn out the same average of students. Now, since this is so, it is far better for us to compare their merely external advantages, which make a difference among them well worth considering.

We may assume that for a college where the students are not yet mature, and where the studies can be pursued easily enough with the aid of text-books and a moderate library, the best location is in a country town, apart from the distractions and temptations of city life. But the same argument will not hold good with regard to professional schools. The students are now men, able to take care of themselves, if they ever will be. Moreover, they are just at the age when young men wish, and ought, to see life. Residence in a great city is the next best thing to foreign travel. It does much towards wearing off the rough provincialism and the rawness of youth that are apt to cling to the average student. And this a great city does, even if he merely lives there and goes about his business with little thought of his surroundings; and far more does it do this if he takes pains to get all the civilizing and refining influences that he may have in a metropolis. He meets a great variety of men. He probably will see something of all grades of society, and something of many nationalities. He learns, too, that he is a very small atom in the tide of humanity that ebbs and flows all around him; that his ideas, his opinions, his very existence, are of very small account after all. In short, he gets the conceit taken out of him amazingly, and begins to get that true self-knowledge which is the beginning of all wisdom.

Moreover, in the intense life of a great city he learns to work rapidly and effectively. Truly, if "fifty years of Europe" is better "than a cycle of Cathay," a decade of New-York is worth a century of "Sleepy Hollow:" there is more real work done. The impulse obtained in two or three years of active city life may last a lifetime. Even trade, usually so narrowing to the mind, becomes a liberalizing influence in a city like New-York, by the scale on which it is conducted and the amount of enterprise and capital required to manage it.

Every great city is a centre, not only of business activity, but of intellectual life—at least of a certain kind. Usually, even the highest intellectual life, that which produces literature, is found in the metropolis. But even where this is wholly or partially deficient, there is a certain amount of intellectual life of the lower kinds. The city is the centre of news, and therefore of newspapers; of politics, and therefore of public assemblages. Great men, and notorious men, can be seen on the streets. We need not trust to report so much, for we can see many things with our own eyes. Many illusions are thus dispelled, many errors corrected. Books and Magazines circulate more freely, libraries are more easily reached, and better ones. Lectures are more frequent, and all the machinery of intellectual life runs more rapidly and with more force. And for the study of the fine arts there is scarcely any opportunity except in great cities.

There are great peculiar advantages of city life; but there are in addition certain special advantages possessed by professional schools in a great city. Our professional schools hold the same relative position to our colleges, that the universities of France and Germany do to their colleges and gymnasia. And it has been found that universities thrive best in great cities. All the important universities founded in this century, Berlin, London, Christiana, and many of the most flourishing older ones, like Paris, Edinburgh, Dublin, Copenhagen, Vienna, are in great cities. The same reasons that hold in Europe, hold here. A

university without a library, is like a man without a head; and a good library can be collected more easily in a metropolis than elsewhere. Here also, are to be found other great libraries, that supplement the deficiencies of the university collection. Again in a great city, there are collateral advantages for a practical acquaintance with each of the professions;—for the lawyer, in the courts held almost daily; for the clergyman, in the great preachers and great charities; for the physician, in the great hospitals and frequent clinics. But more than all these, the professors are almost sure to be superior men. A country university may keep one great man: a city university will be sure to have several. For, allowing other things to be equal which is not the case usually, the intellectual society of the metropolis, its superior advantages for work in any department of thought, and the wider opportunities for fame and usefulness, continually draw off the great thinkers to the metropolis, and away from the country universities. Here, as elsewhere, the tendency of our age is toward the cities—centripetal, not centrifugal.—*American Educational Monthly.*

### Why is Mechanical Labor Objectionable?

We reproduce the following from the *Philadelphia Ledger*:

A few days ago, a gentleman advertised for a clerk. By the close of the first day on which the advertisement appeared there were four hundred and eighteen applicants for the one clerkship. This afforded a very forcible illustration of the extent to which the occupation of clerking and book-keeping is overstocked. But a few months since the head of a business establishment, who wished some help in the way of writing, but in which some literary ability was required, advertised for an assistant at a moderate salary, and having incidentally mentioned that the position might suit a lawyer or physician not in a good practice, got more than a hundred applications, of which fifty-three were from young lawyers and doctors.

Here was another illustration of an over-supply of the professional or "genteel occupations." Another advertiser who wanted a person to take charge of the editorial work of a weekly paper, got fifty-seven applications, not more than half a dozen of the applicants being recognized newspaper writers, but nearly all of them being clerks, book-keepers, and professional men. Still another advertised for two apprentices in a wheelwright and smith shop, in one of the semi-rural wards of the city, requesting applicants to give their address and age. He got three applications, but in every case the applicant was too old, two of them being over eighteen, and one nearly twenty. Still another advertised for an office boy, about fourteen years old, and had so many applicants that his place was crowded for more than five hours, and the applicants were of all ages, from mere children, not more than twelve years old, to full grown men of twenty-one.

These are not very cheerful or encouraging signs. The present generation of young men seem to have a strong aversion to every kind of trade, business, calling, or occupation that requires manual labor, and an equally strong tendency toward some so-called "genteel" employment or profession. The result is seen in such lamentable facts as those above stated—a surplus of book-keepers and clerks of every kind who can get no employment, and are wasting their lives in the vain pursuit of what is not to be had, and terrible over-stock of lawyers without practice and doctors without patients. The passion on the part of boys and young men to be clerks, office attendants, messengers any thing, so that it is not work of the kind that will make them mechanics or tradesmen, is a deplorable sight to those who have full opportunities to see the distressing effect of it in the struggle for such employments by those unfortunates who have put it out of their power to do anything else, by neglecting to learn some permanent trade or business in which trained skill can always be turned to account.

The applications for clerkships and similar positions in large