

ture to give some hints. Do not limit yourselves merely to the consideration of what will pay in the examinations, or will be profitable as a means of winning college prizes or honours. This is, after all, a small ambition, and you should look beyond it to the active work of life, and to the higher object of the best training for yourselves. You should bear in mind that those who know best regard these compulsions and stimuli of college life merely as a rude means of promoting a diligence which in the highest style of minds would be secured by nobler motives. It should be understood that the gaining of a prize or medal or honour parchment, or the applause of a crowded convocation hall ought not to be the highest meed of the student. College honours, such as they are, are only an index of powers applicable to nobler uses in the future life of their winner. At least it is only in so far as they have this character that they are of real value, and they should be of this character in any well contrived course of study.

Examinations, and especially competitive examinations, are regarded with much faith in our time. They will be less trusted in the age that is coming, that is if it can devise better means of securing steady application and accurate learning. They tend too much to that "cram" which has been truly defined as the partaking of food without previous appetite or subsequent digestion. It is of the nature of examinations, in order that their results may be precise, and that they may suit different kinds of students, to be always a little behind the knowledge of the age, and to give too little encouragement to the best and most advanced teachers. This consideration is leading scientific men, more especially, to entertain grave doubts as to the expediency of the establishment of those great examining universities which bring together the students of different institutions, and lay them all on the procrustean bed of a uniform examination, not conducted by their own teachers. It is being discovered, as indeed a little higher insight might have predicted, that this must lead rather to a Chinese uniformity and stagnation than to rapid progress in literature or science. For this reason I would advise the student in deciding as to any special or honour course, to be influenced not so much by the immediate prospect of college advantage as by an en-

lightened estimate of his own powers, and by a regard to his future prospects. The knowledge of himself is one of the best possible acquirements, and should be one of his great aims in the early years of his student life. Perhaps no gain is greater to the young man than the self-knowledge which comes as a natural result of the effort to grasp a considerable range of varied study and to compete with minds of various degrees of power. If nothing else were secured by college life, this would be worth its cost. Once gained, it gives a confidence of the highest value, and a diffidence of equal value; above all, it gives the best practical guidance as to the line of study and of pursuit which it will be wisest to follow. Were this much of education generally attained, there would be fewer misplaced men.

In throwing yourselves into any special line of study with reference to professional employment, do not fear the result, if you are in the path marked out by your powers and tendencies. We hear constantly, even in this land of growth and "elbow-room," of some professions and occupations being overstocked, or being less inviting than others; but all are good for the best men. There is always room at the top. The crowd is around the bottom. A man may do well in any profession, provided he loves it, and is well suited for it by nature and training. It is true that the enthusiasm and hopefulness of youth may often suggest courses that may seem chimerical to the colder judgment of age; but all wise men have much respect for that noble, if sometimes wild and misguided earnestness and originality of thought and aim which mark the man of genius and power, and which, if they run in channels not immoral, will produce better fruits than the tame and listless plodding of mere mediocrity in some of the ordinary and usual lines of business or professional life. Not that we should despise the man of mediocrity. The world largely depends on such for what the genius of specialists could not give. But the great evil is when the man of medium gifts thinks himself a genius, or when the man of unusual gifts fails to recognize and use the powers for good which God has given him. It is one great mission of a good educational system to give guidance as to these points. I may be permitted here to refer to my own somewhat erratic experience. When I was a college student there was no natural science