

you look back to that time the interval seems short and the value of the studies through these four years may appear to you less than you anticipated. It would not be possible for any of us to tell what that value may be. If you should attempt to estimate it, you would make grave mistakes. In coming years you will find, I am persuaded, that some of the most valuable results of such a course of study are now less obvious and advantages that are now regarded as the chief reward will be judged by a different standard.

But it is not my purpose to enumerate the advantages of a liberal education and attempt to estimate their value. Estimates of this kind can be at best but loosely generalized statements, because in each individual case the result must depend on antecedent preparation, natural fitness for the work, habits of application and other modifying conditions. As the value of these factors will vary in different cases, the judgments formed respecting the value of a liberal education must necessarily vary. But it may be expected that certain results common to all cases will be developed under any efficient administration of the duties of a college class-room for the period of four years. I wish to call your attention at this time to two of these results. One is the development of a sense of the impotence of the human mind,—indeed, if we may ever use the word, we may say the absolute impotence of the human mind in respect to many of the most strenuous questions that have challenged thought. You have met such questions in your several departments of study and have felt the inadequacy of the intellect to deal with them successfully. What is reality? What is matter? Your text books may say, an intricate combination of atoms. But an atom of what? Who knows? We are familiar with what we call the effects of force. But what is force? Something stored in some reservoir that in certain conditions can escape to act on forceless matter? Surely not such an absurdity as that. But who knows what it is? Many speculations have been put forth in respect to the origin and ground of the universe. Back of what we call the physical effect we place a cause. Yet no one can tell what physical causation is. How much of this world that seems to us so real has a real existence outside of us and how much is the product of the knowing mind? From the earliest periods of history reflecting minds have faced the world with this question and no adequate answer has been found. These are some of the problems that have perplexed you as they have troubled and conquered multitudes before you. We cannot conclude otherwise than that they will continue to baffle the intellect of man.

It is true that the course of human life has been marked by discoveries of facts that were unknown to observers of an earlier time; but all these facts are held within the same closed sphere. If we flatter ourselves with the belief that the horizon of thought has become broader as the centuries have passed, it still remains the limited horizon of human thought. The universe with its mysteries and powers is beyond the reach of our broadest conceptions.

The lesson of this limitation you must have learned. But out of this come other lessons for every thoughtful mind,—lessons of humility, patience and faith. A lesson of humility: a liberally educated person cannot be puffed up with conceit, as if he had gathered all knowledge and possessed all wisdom. He remembers that he is always on the border-land of the unknown and the unknowable, and if his soul is attuned to the finer harmonies of things, he will walk there thoughtfully and reverently. A lesson of