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PROFESSOR ALEXANDER BAIN, in his "Education as a Science," enumerates, before the commencement of the subject proper, several definitions of the word "education." Our readers are probably familiar with the more important of the various analyses, which have been made of the meaning of this word, and doubtless these analyses have opened their eyes to the profundity of the subject. A little thought on the aim of education, and a brief search for the best means to attain that aim, are sufficient to show us how intricate and involved a problem we have before us. To us it seems an insoluble problem, worthy the best thought of the best intellect. How best to prepare the most complex of animals for the most complex of environments might well puzzle the acutest thinker. And when such elements as the rational, æsthetic, and moral faculties are added, it seems almost a hopeless task to formulate even the first steps of the process of tuition.

IN an address delivered before the University of Harvard in the year 1883, by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., are some remarks on this twofold problem which struck us as singularly felicitous, and replete with common sense. Mr. Adams, it must be remembered, is a staunch opponent of a classical education. The classics he calls the "fetich of the college." Making allowances for this, the following quotations will be read with interest. He is speaking of the world into which he was about to enter, and of the methods his *alma mater* employed to fit him for that world. We quote at length:—

"When the men of my time graduated Franklin Pierce was President, the war in the Crimea was just over, and three years were yet to pass before Solferino would be fought. No united Germany and no united Italy existed. The railroad and the telegraph were in their infancy; neither nitro-glycerine nor the telephone had been discovered. The years since then have been fairly crammed with events. A new world has come into existence, and a world wholly unlike that of our fathers—unlike it in peace and unlike it in war. It is a world of great intellectual quickening, which has extended until it now touches a vastly larger number of men, in many more countries, than it ever touched before. Not only have the nations been rudely shaken up, but they have been drawn together; interdependent thought has been carried on, interacting agencies have been at work in widely separated countries and in different languages. The solidarity

of the peoples has been developed. Old professions have lost their prominence; new professions have arisen. Science has extended its domains, and is superseding authority with a rapidity which is bewildering. The artificial barriers—national, political, social, economical, religious, intellectual—are giving way in every direction, and the civilized races of the world are becoming one people, even if a highly discordant and quarrelsome people. The world as it is may be a very bad and a very vulgar world—insincere, democratic, disrespectful, dangerous, and altogether hopeless. I do not think it is; but with that somewhat comprehensive issue I have, here and now, nothing to do. However bad and hopeless, it is nevertheless the world in which our lot was cast, and in which we have had to live—a bustling, active, nervous world, and one very hard to keep up with. This much all will admit; while I think I may further add, that its most marked characteristic has been an intense mental and physical activity, which, working simultaneously in many tongues, has attempted much and questioned everything.

"Now as respects the college preparation we received to fit us to take part in this world's debate. As one goes on in life, especially modern life, I think it safe to say that a few conclusions are hammered into us by the hard logic of facts. As generally accepted among those conclusions, I think I may, without much fear of contradiction, enumerate such practical, common-sense, as well as commonplace precepts as that superficiality is dangerous as well as contemptible, in that it is apt to invite defeat; or, again, that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well; or, third, that when one is given work to do, it is well to prepare one's self for that specific work, and not to occupy one's time in acquiring information, no matter how innocent or elegant, or generally useful, which has no probable bearing on that work; or, finally—and this I regard as the greatest of all practical precepts—that every man should in life master some one thing, be it great or be it small, so that as respects that thing, he is the highest living authority; that one thing he should know thoroughly. How did Harvard College prepare me and my 92 classmates of the year 1856 for our work in a life in which we have had these homely precepts brought close to us? In answering the question it is not altogether easy to preserve one's gravity. The college fitted us for this active, bustling, hard-hitting, many-tongued world, caring nothing for authority and little for the past, but full of its living thought and living issues, in dealing with which there was no man who did not stand in pressing

and constant need of every possible preparation as respects knowledge and exactitude and thoroughness—the poor old college prepared us to play our parts in this world by compelling us, directly and indirectly, to devote the best part of our school lives to acquiring a confessedly superficial knowledge of two dead languages. But in pursuing Greek and Latin we had ignored our mother tongue."

These are the utterances of a man who, after thirty years' battling with the world, comes back to chide his *alma mater* for the plan she adopted in preparing him for that strife. We must be careful not to be carried away by Mr. Adams's idiosyncracies. The classical training which he so severely deprecates has produced men well-fitted to make their way in the world. This is indubitable. But, laying this aside, the dispassionate and thoughtful words which a clear-headed man addresses to the members of one of the first universities on this continent should be for us full of lessons. And these of Mr. Adams are so.

Of such lessons the eminently practical light in which the speaker regarded all educating processes is of great value. There is a breadth in his view that is truly refreshing. Education with him means something that will enable a man—not to translate a dead language; not to retain in his memory certain artificial systems; not to comprehend a difficult author; not even to acquire such technical knowledge as will be required in the ordinary businesses of life—but something that will enable a man to cope with his fellow-men in the struggle for existence; will enable him to view the affairs of life from every aspect, not from one only, and consequently to arrive at sounder judgments regarding them; will enable him not only to take his place behind the plough or the counter if need be, but also in the family circle, in the church, in the committee-room, in the legislature—in short, in any walk of life. Anything short of this Mr. Adams decries. A "narrow, scientific and technological education" is his abhorrence.

For ourselves, we must say that this bird's-eye view of education is most consonant with our own opinions. Education, we think, cannot be looked at from too high a plane. And to us there is nothing either visionary or impracticable in so looking at it. Too comprehensive a survey can never be taken of any single subject. If such view leaves out of sight details, it at least gives us clearer insight into the scope and function of the whole. Broader views are still sadly wanted in this the most complex of processes.