

## FROM THE CLASSICAL STANDPOINT.

I have read the article written by 'Gef,' and have endured with heroic patience, the many slurs cast upon the honor courses, and in particular that of classics, but I can go no further than the article entitled 'An Honorable Order.' 'Gef.' inveighs against the tendency of the present curriculum to narrow a man's education, and makes this outburst the vehicle for a most opprobrious compliment to the men of the modern department, saying that the men who graduate in classics are unable at the end of their course to read them with any pleasure, but the men who take moderns have the ability to read with ease any of the modern authors. Now, setting aside the invidious contrast made between the abilities of the men of these departments, this statement is really not correct. Take the most difficult Greek author, Plato, and the most difficult modern author (read in college), Goethe, and the classical man will make the truer translation, and will hit the meaning with greater accuracy. But it seems to me, all the comparisons made between the several departments, rests in a great measure on a misconception of what a university training should be, and of what it undertakes to do for us.

The greatest benefit of a university course is not the education given, but general culture and the broader views we obtain of life and men from our intercourse in so large numbers. A university has begun to lose its influence when *esprit de corps* is wanting. For men who intend to pursue professional life or to enter upon literary pursuits, the education which they obtain in their college course is merely intended to place them in a position to choose their work for life and enter upon a true course of study. It is the greatest mistake that we can make to suppose that we are now getting our education for life, and that it closes when the ermine is donned on commencement day. For no profession can a university education be in any sense final, except for that of teaching, and this is not as it should be.

Another error is in taking for granted that an honor man of our department reads nothing but his honor work. In my judgment, the greatest benefit of an honor course is that it compels men to read carefully and with steady application. Here I trample upon the fond belief of the passmen, that the several parts of their intellects are being nourished, under the fostering care of their Alma Mater into a complete whole. It may be so, but, looking at the face of the matter, the development seems to be primary. Let us make a small generalization from experience, always keeping in mind that our standard of reference is the ordinary individual of either class. It is notorious that the amount of work required to enable a man to 'pass' in any subject is extremely small. I, myself, a man of very moderate parts, whose intellect has been warped by long study of the dead authors, succeeded in passing the 'pass' mathematics of the second examination with but little more than half a day's work, though I nearly grounded on the bar. You will find many others who make the same boast in a greater or less degree, though the honor due to such an achievement is rather doubtful. Indeed, the language at my disposal fails to express the contempt which I entertain for examinations

with such a minimum. Surely no passman will contend that the intellect is at all increased in breadth by passing a hundred such examinations. It is rather narrowed, on the contrary, to enable one to get through so small a crevice. Again, there is a third mistake which is often made. The class of men which the vigorous upholders of pass courses, or of combinations of several honor courses, have in their minds, is that to which the terms 'fags' or 'grinds' is applied, or, the more emphatic appellation of 'reading men.' They hold in abhorrence a man who is so thoroughly soaked in his college work that he knows nothing else. So do I, but I wish to point out that a man laboring under the weight of two, three or more honor departments, may have even still less knowledge of anything that is really useful to a man of the world. Many a man who takes several departments through his course, thinks, talks and dreams of nothing else than his work, makes the end of his course the end of his life, and when he graduates has simply stepped out of existence in any living sense. His mind is indeed harmoniously developed, but it is merely a highly complex machine without any motive power, and he ceases to be of any interest to men around him except as a curious fossil.

Looking at university life in the way I have stated it, a classical course possesses more attractions than almost any other to a man who does not intend to be a specialist; and, as far as polish and knowledge of human life have weight, it is indispensable. The gentlemen of the modern department have not the monopoly of modern literature, neither has Shakespeare made an heirloom of his effects to them. I venture to affirm that in our university their is better acquaintance with English literature, of modern times, among men who are studying the classics than among those of any other department. You may look with disdain upon the examinations held in classics, made up as they are of petty quibbles and long lists, and feel surprised at the weakness in numbers of the teaching staff of a department so much vaunted in our university, which should contain three or four good men if classics are to be studied at all. The same idea often occurs to ourselves, the devotees of classics, and perhaps with greater force; and we look with envy upon the departments of metaphysics and naturals which are so well supported, but still, at the same time, we recognize the real value of classical study which forms the basis of a great mass of the most active modern thought, though it is not considered necessary to pad out the reviews with hackneyed quotations, and a man's fame does not depend so much on a work in three volumes on Greek particles or metres. Neither let passmen flatter themselves that they can 'laugh with Horace at the follies of men,' one of which is included in their profession of being able to do so. It may be the case in some universities on the continent, but here such a statement must be taken *cum grano salis*.

A LOP-SIDED MAN.

## THE IMMORTALS OF '80. W. W.

Have you noticed the humble tread of the professors lately around the corridors? Neither are their voices so loud in the class-room, and the spirit of superior wisdom has died within them.

Have you noticed the third year is oppressed with gloom? And second year men have buried their woes in 'organ recitals, and denials futile (though presidentially complimented) of a land beyond the grave? Only the exuberant freshman rejoices, the exuberant freshman who knows not care, neither is his breast disturbed.

And have you noticed the wherefore of this thing and the cause of this gloom before the porch of Learning's palace?

Arise, for the cause is not far to seek, and yet it has its seat in the deepest recess of the selfish human soul.

It is the oppressive sense of a near higher presence.

We have now among us—suddenly the knowledge has come—a revival of the giants. 'There were giants in those days, days.' Pshaw! there are giants in these days, here, now. At this very moment, time, place, amongst us, shaking hands with us, imbibing of us, passing in and out among us, *dii certe*.

O ye, who, about to be what you are about to be, are what you are, thanks! Thanks in that you are kind, and, soon to be immortal, deign to be mortal. Thanks, class of '80, in this that, comprising in your ranks all the judges, politicians, artists, literateurs, knights, governors, princes, and elders of this Dominion and what other of earth's dominions their great luck calls you to, you still veil the brightness in a kindly cloud, still tonsting your feet (*mirabile dictu!* just as any other mortals!) study Kant, (*mirabile dictu!* again! just like other mundanes!) smoke the myrtle, drink the bowl, eat, sleep, talk, walk, laugh, joke, pay homage to Neilson (oh! for the third time *mirabile dictu!* like other, just for all the world like other mortals!) thanks. And for this, that while the fire of genius is still veiled you will have those features stamped by the limner's art that after mortals may see what you were like (and seeing be saved from despair) when you toasted your feet, read Kant, smoke, eat, drank, slept, talked, walked, just as they toast their feet, read Kant, smoke, drink, eat, sleep, talk, walk; for this thing, thanks.

That ye, who are about to be what you are about to be, are what you are, is wonderful, most wonderful.

And the genius of it! In ten years! Genius annihilates time.

In ten years, at the dinner that is to be given, in the least of reason that is to come, when the legislators, judges, knights, governors, princes, and elders sit down and tell each other for fear the fact should be incredible what ten years back they were, what now they are, the wonder and the sadness of it come together. The sadness of it, aye, there's the rub—the sadness of it for us others who have toasted our feet, read Kant, eaten, drank, smoked, talked, just as they, but being what we are, will be what we will be, but not as they.

Is Heaven impartial that these things are so, and that genius should be hurled broadcast on this year, that is not our year, but is just before or after, and trebly sad for being so close? That the legislators and judges, the knights, the governors, the princes and the elders should be picked thence, and we be left to serve these greater.

Is there no chance? couldn't they scoop another year in with them and throw their cloak over us eager, and double by such great act our own glory?

Let us petition.

c.