

## THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION.

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PROBABLY there is no question more often aimed at college graduates than this : What is the use of grinding away at the classics, mathematics, and all the 'ologies? And the question is often asked in good faith, and we all ought to be provided with an answer. The intellectual aristocrat might reply with a general negative, and very possibly the answer would be correct, for we cannot disguise the fact that with the single exception of teaching, college learning has no cash value, that is to say, there is no market where one can take his Latin, Greek, and Mathematics, and turn them into money. Now all knowledge may be roughly divided into two classes, into the immediately useful and the potentially useful ; into that which perfects a man in his trade or profession, and that which increases the mental stature of the man. We all know the passage in the *Iliad*, where the poet describes the hewing of the ship timber ; the artisan accomplishes his work, but the labour increases the strength of the man. The two results go together. In the language of philosophy, there is the objective result of the work accomplished and the subjective result of the increased power of the actor. Now, when the task is a mental one and not physical, the strength of the mind is increased just as the strength of the arm of Homer's ship carpenter was ; and that is what we mean by mental discipline. This mental discipline is one of the great aims of education. The man must possess himself, must have full control over his bodily furniture ; and this control is most easily and surely gained by a carefully arranged mental curriculum ; a course of intellectual gymnastics

which will do for the mind what the gymnasium does for the body.

The great object of a liberal education is not the imparting of knowledge ; it is the teaching of wisdom. Boys go to college and men come from it. And consequently the course of study is not planned for the making of good lawyers, doctors, chemists, and merchants ; but to make men, well-developed men, physically and mentally. Hence the practical value consists in the elevation of character, in the more lively sympathy with the true, the good, and the beautiful, and in the increase of mental power noted above. We claim that, other things being equal, the liberally educated man is a man of greater power, of greater influence in the community ; that his training strengthens him for any calling in life ; but above all, that his ability to enjoy the higher pleasures of life is vastly greater. This is the great advantage ; this more than compensates for the trouble and time spent in the class-room. Is it nothing to be able to see the beauties of a painting, to be delighted with a musical symphony, to see poetic beauty? " But this power is special and technical ; it belongs to the artist, the musician, the poet." Very true ; so it does, in its perfection, but the lower degree of enjoyment acquired by general culture gives pleasure also. Imagine for a moment, the plan of life on which a savage lives ; imagine the whole teaching of history and the heritage of culture swept away from us. Even the Philistine can see the difference between the savage and the civilized man ; or, as I prefer to put it, between the cultivated and uncultivated one. If, then, there is an unconscious cultivation gained from the civilization