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MY DAY IN NEW YORK is Thursday
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UNIVERSITY IDEALS.

[Continued from page 203.]

Again, it is a vicious thing to teach a boy to rely on his memory for details. A person whose memory is overloaded with facts which are supposed to be of use is popularly said to be crammed; and the prejudice against this process which is implied in the popular use of that word is thoroughly justified. It may be a momentary necessity to cram for a particular test or a particular case, but the necessity is an unfortunate one. The healthily constituted mind forgets as soon as may be the things with which it has been thus crammed. To teach the student that higher education has any analogy to a permanent cramming process is false in theory and pernicious in practice. Even in preparing him for a narrow and well-defined end, the true process is one of training rather than cramming. Not by teaching the boy the particular things which he is expected to do as one might teach a parrot, is education to be compassed, but by teaching him methods of work which will serve his turn in a variety of conditions. Thus, and thus only, can we lay the foundations for a successful intellectual life.

THE BEST EQUIPPED MAN.

It is not the man who knows the greatest number of useful things that is best equipped, but the man who has the power most quickly to find the things he wants, most persistently and clearly to reason out their relations to one another, and most completely to forget the non-essential parts as soon as he is done with them. This is intellectual training; and a course of study which gives this habit of research and order and completion of each thing by itself has a value that increases as years go on. Grave as were the defects of the one-sided system of classical education, it is probably true that the boy who learned from it those intellectual habits which were known by the name of mental discipline went into life better equipped than the man whose studies had rendered him familiar with all the more important facts of every day life, and unfamiliar with the habit of handling tough and knotty problems as they might arise.

For the facts of life can be learned as they are needed. A great many of them must be learned in that way and in no other. But habits of reasoning, in nineteen men out of twenty, are the result of good training as distinct from bad training; and if the acquisition of facts

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has been allowed to take the place of good training, it has been purchased at a price all too dear.

Thus far we are on safe ground. Only those who are inexperienced in educational problems will allow themselves to be so blinded by the attractions of cram as to forget the superior claims of discipline.

THEORY RATHER THAN PRACTICE.

Our next point is a more doubtful one, and needs to be studied more carefully. It is this: In the matter of training, itself, our higher institutions of learning should undertake to teach theory rather than practice; methods of reasoning rather than methods of doing things.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not wish to countenance the old idea that all learning should be obtained through books. Books are best understood when their lessons are combined with the lessons of the laboratory. But I mean that the laboratory should be in reality a laboratory, and not a workshop,—a place primarily for scientific experiment and determination of principles, rather than for the construction of a finished product, valuable for its utility.

I say this with a fair measure of confidence, because I am sure that it represents the general tendency of American professional schools, and that this tendency is itself a result of the experience of their graduates. The best law schools in the country concern themselves less with the purely practical side of their teaching, and more with the development in the student of the power of thought which underlies the cases that are studied. The best medical schools are become, in relatively less degree, schools of applied medicine, and more schools of advanced physiology and pathology. In many, at least, of the scientific schools—though here the question has been made the subject of controversy on which I am loath to enter—the tendency of late years is to reduce the purchase of apparatus and physical appliances to a minimum, and make the study of science a study of applied mathematics, even as the study of the law is become a study of legal principles.

Of course the degree to which we can insist on this exaltation of the theoretical and subordination of the practical training depends wholly on the subject. In general, it is perhaps safe to say that in those things which are nominally most practical, like physical science or law, the need for emphasis on the theoretical training is relatively greatest; while in those less immediately practical matters, like music or painting, the importance of practical masters at the university becomes more strongly felt. The reason for the apparent paradox is this; that whereas in the law office or in the shop the student is constantly in the midst of practical routine, and must learn his theory either at college or not at all, in music or in painting the very character of the work allows more of the theoretical contemplation in after life, and renders the early acquirement of the practical technique more essential.

TEACHING TO REASON.

Not only must the university really train its students, and train them in habits of reasoning, but it must, I think, in the opinion of the most clear-sighted American observers, teach them to reason in more than one line. We must recognize that the university is not a place solely or primarily for the training of specialists, but, as far as time and financial conditions will allow, for the training of citizens.

Not that there is any consensus of opinion on this point. On the other hand, there is a large and influential class of thinkers who are disinclined to call any education a university education until it has become specialized; who conceive of our higher institutions of learning as charged with the primary duty of training skillful specialists in those theories which shall enable them to take the lead in the country and in the world in their various professions or callings. To the man who holds this view, delay in the choice of a lifework seems a misfortune, and a system of training which countenances such delay involves, to his mind, a waste of the productive forces of the community. It is on this principle that the universities of France and, speaking broadly, those of Germany, are constituted. It is in no

slight sympathy with this view that many of our newer universities, whose graduate departments have outweighed their collegiate department in importance, have been conceived and carried on. And it may fairly be added that even the most enthusiastic advocate of the principle of broad education in America feels the necessity of providing for enough specialization to prevent the student from degenerating into a dilettante, without concentration on any one line.

THE CONTROLLING ARGUMENT.

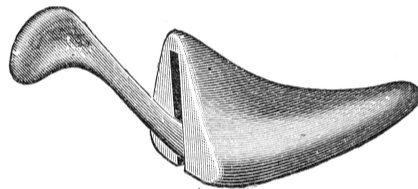
What then are the arguments which can be urged against a view supported by such plausible reasons and such large weight of authority? They are derived mainly from the nature and constitution of the American state. We are educating independent citizens to exercise their share of rule and leadership in a democratic society. Much as we need to have good lawyers and good doctors, good engineers and good artists, we need still more to have good citizens. Our primary object is not to train a man to fill his place as a part of a well ordered machine, but to see to it that he is capable of independent judgment concerning the running of that machine as a whole. He must understand and be interested in the affairs of the commonwealth for whose safety he is responsible.

It is this difference of conception of the relations of the citizens to society which is accountable for the different character of university education on the

[Continued on page 205.]

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