

**THE HIGHER EDUCATION
AS A TRAINING FOR
BUSINESS. PP. 1-53**

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The Higher Education as a Training for Business. pp. 1-53 by Harry Pratt Judson

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The Higher Education
as a Training for
Business

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PREFACE.

Few facts in education are more striking of late years than the growth in attendance at colleges and universities. The rate of this growth considerably exceeds that of the population of the country as a whole. A concomitant fact is the comparatively small number of college students who are seeking the learned professions. The great mass of the young men in college after graduation will be connected with some form of business.

There are those who think that the present situation is a mistake; that young men are wasting their time, so far as a business career is concerned, by spending years in obtaining a college course. Is this a correct view of the situation?

It must not be forgotten that no college can insure an education to a young man. More definitely, no college ever gives an education to anyone. All that colleges can do is to provide the facilities whereby one who

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PREFACE

wishes may educate himself more efficiently than would otherwise be practicable. It is believed that students who wish may obtain knowledge and training in a college course which will fit them to be more efficient than would otherwise be the case in business activity. It is also believed that a liberal education may provide not merely such increased efficiency, but also so much wider comprehension of society and life as to enable one to be useful and to find interest in a multitude of ways not usual with one who lacks such an education. A college education, in short, may enable one to earn a living. It should also teach one how to live. The following few pages are an attempt to set forth what seem to be considerations in these directions.

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TRAINING FOR BUSINESS.

WHY GO TO COLLEGE?

"Why should I send my boy to college? He is going into business. If he spends four of his choicest years in student life he will be apt to get expensive habits and unpractical ideas; he will learn little or nothing which he can use. After all he will have to begin at the beginning in his business, and he will merely be so much behind other young men who have been at work while he has been idling. Besides, I never saw the inside of a college, and yet my business career has been a marked success. The same thing is true of most men I meet. What is the use of wasting so much time and money?"

These are questions which many a thoughtful father asks himself, and to which a con-

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clusive answer is not always at hand. The following pages are an attempt to group some thoughts which may aid in solving the problem. But this should be distinctly understood at the outset—it is not expected that the conclusion will in all cases be the same. Boys are not alike. Circumstances differ. The wise man is one who is able to apply principles to conditions as they exist. In short, some boys intended for a business life ought by all means to be sent to college. Others as certainly should be kept away from college. And there are others of whom it really does not matter whether they go or stay.

MANY SUCCESSFUL MEN NEVER IN COLLEGE

There is no doubt at all that great success in business may be won and is won by men who have had very scanty schooling. Bankers, railroad presidents, millionaires of all sorts, who know nothing of college education, are as thick as blackberries. And many of these are not merely men who have amassed a fortune; they are often men of great knowledge of the world, statesmen, philanthropists, con-

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noisseurs in art and music. They are always men of great force of character. They are the "self-made men" for whom our democratic American society has afforded so many chances and of whom we are so justly proud. And some of these men are inclined to sneer at the college as merely ornamental—at college life as more or less elegant idling—at college studies as a sort of educational *bric-a-brac*. Horace Greeley used to say in his forcible way, "Of all horned cattle, deliver me from a college graduate." And so there has come to be in many minds a sharp antithesis between the higher education and business—such an antagonism as there is between dawdling and doing.

SCHOLARS OFTEN POOR BUSINESS MEN.

This feeling is perhaps deepened by the further undoubted fact that many highly trained scholars are poor business men. Clergymen and authors and college professors sometimes take a sort of pride in being unpractical. They live in a land of dreams, but the butcher and the baker will not take their pay in dreams. Yet the habit of "high

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thinking" apparently takes these dreamers so very high in the air that they have learned a lofty contempt for the ground. "Mere material considerations" are vulgar. A new aristocracy has grown up among us—the aristocracy of "culture." And just as the old French noblesse disdained manual labor as a peasantly employment, so our modern intellectual noblesse are apt to despise all business as uninteresting, sordid, common. "Practical"—this word to numbers of our educated men, especially in their earlier years, is like a red rag to a bull. Our Western civilization is inferior to that of the East, because the West is too "practical." Life in the new world is far and away less desirable than that across the Atlantic, because in America we are too much absorbed in the engrossing task of developing material resources.

Now, when a man is in this way of thinking, he is hardly apt to handle with much interest or success such matters of business as fall to his lot. Every man is perforce obliged to do something in managing affairs. But if he cannot seem to conduct the simplest matters without muddling them—if he is appar-

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