

WEAK SPOTS IN UNIVERSITY WORK.

It is assumed that when a young man or a young woman goes to a university that the instruction will be of a very superior character, but this is, in a great majority of cases, the farthest possible from the actual, statement of the facts in the premises. Instead of experienced and able professors doing the work, it is handed over to a class of young graduates who have, or are supposed to have, a little bit more of the subjects they teach than the members of the class. It is like putting a child that can read in the Fourth reader to instructing a class in the Third reader, and the difference in the teaching, in the one instance, pupils and age considered, is not greater than in the other.

As an illustration of this point, it is well known that many of the best scholars in New England do not come from Harvard and Yale, but from the best New England colleges in which the instruction is given by able and mature professors who give a length, breadth and inspiration to their work and to their classes which no novice can possess. The keen New Englander, instead of putting his son at once into one of the great schools, places him in one of the best colleges and lets him remain there till he graduates, or till he can enter the senior class at the university, when he will come in contact with the best and most mature minds there. If a young man comes through Harvard or Yale now a good scholar, it is because he received his training elsewhere and not under tutors who receive three or four hundred dollars a year salary to half-way steer young men through their studies for three or four years. Of course, it is an excellent thing for the tutors, but a very poor method of training and discipline for the students.

There are really able men at the heads of the departments, who do a little lecturing, but very much in the way of directing the awkward and half-informed corporals how to conduct their recitations, and sometimes these professors do actually get around to see how the work is progressing in certain weak spots. This is about the extent of their supervision. This is the very thing Garfield had in mind when he said that he would rather have Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and his son on the other than to have him attend many colleges and universities that he could mention. A little reflection and common sense are all that are necessary for a parent to see how a boy may go through a great university and receive little benefit. The social phase, the football games and other rough and tumble affairs are great aids to the young man who would pick up an education from tutors and classmates as well, and perhaps better, than from the regular professors.