WHAT HAS MY EDUCATION DONE FOR ME?

by

Albert Jay Nock

The entrance of a young man into college indicates the conviction existing either in his own mind or in the minds of those whose influence has guided him to take this step, that it is necessary for his intellectual faculties to go through a certain process in order to develop them to a higher power than that which is granted to them by nature. This process is called education; and in considering its advantages; in estimating the benefit that it confers; and in establishing a comparison between the relative intellectual merits and qualifications of different men, it must be kept clearly before our mind that it is a process and not a result; a means and not an end; a methodical system of training, whereby our attention is disciplined, and we are enabled to exercise the functions of our mind in a precise and orderly manner; to form accurate conceptions; to represent our mental images promptly and faithfully; to reason with concentration, clearness and continuity; and to make our judgments and conclusions in a correct and logical manner.

This constitutes an education; and these are the considerations which are involved when we propose to determine what our education has done for us.

We must apply this standard to ourselves; we must ask ourselves these questions; we must make a comparison between our intellectual habits and aptitudes as they existed at the beginning of our collegiate course, and as existing at the present time; and if, upon such a comparison, we ascertain that these developments and alterations have taken place; that we have a more extended and certain control over our intellectual operations; that our attention has been trained into obedience; that we have obtained the power of prolonging the range of our mental activity to any desired extent; we may confidently assure ourselves that our education has accomplished every purpose which it was intended to accomplish; that the benefit which we have derived from it is such as will go on multiplying upon itself indefinitely, exhibiting itself and our-

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A Commencement Address, delivered June 16th, A.D., 1892, by Albert Jay Nock, of the Class of '92, St. Stephen's College, Annandale, New York.