In a few months we shall have arrived once more at the period signalized in the catalogue as "degrees conferred." Then will the regulars of '85, with the long-cherished sheepskins, the reward of four years of application, bid us good-by, and go out in search of new worlds to conquer. But what of the specials? They have journeyed along side by side, year after year, doing practical work, members of the same class; and what does their Alma Mater give them on leaving her walls, to show for their work? Simply an "honorable dismissal." No more, and no less, than she gives a student who enters, remains a few months, and then finally withdraws (provided he has no bad debts).

Now with all deference to the superior wisdom of the powers that be, we wish here to inquire, Is this just?

Let us look at it a moment. Of the total number of students in the School of Industrial Science, nearly one half are special students.

If we inquire into the reasons for these students pursuing a special course, we shall find that in very many cases it is by their own choice, the student after careful deliberation having satisfied himself that, owing to causes over which he has no control, it is the wisest course to pursue. The idea which some unthinking persons seem to entertain, that the special course is simply a "catch-all" for those unable to retain their status as "regulars," needs only to be stated to show its absurdity. True, there are some who have lost their "regular" standing by failing in some subject which, as often happens, may have no direct bearing upon their profession. But this may be through no fault of their own.

At any rate, a glance at the list of special students will be sufficient to show that it contains as good material as can be found in the Institute. And if we were to follow them out in after life, where the real test of ability and attainment comes, we shall find that the men who have come out from special courses are fully abreast of their "regular" brethren.

To quote from the recent report of President Walker: "The Faculty will not cease to encourage the coming to the Institute of certain special students, whose circumstances, or whose age at the time of entering, will not permit them to take the full regular course. Among such students have always been found some of our best scholars; and from them have come some of our most successful engineers, chemists and architects."

And yet, when these special students have done their work, they must leave with nothing to show as to whether their attainments here have been good, bad, or indifferent. This, we have reason to believe, will be learned with surprise by many friends of the Institute, and perhaps by many of the students themselves.