

SCIENCE

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AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES¹

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MANY of the great industrial concerns of the present day are said to earn their dividends by means of their by-products. Not that their main work is the less essential, but that the keenness of competition has forced the managers to pay close attention to every source of revenue. If this is the case with industry it may be said with equal truth that the benefits of institutions among men often consist chiefly of their indirect effects; and I want to speak to-night of one great indirect influence for good of American universities. By an indirect effect I mean one which is not a conscious object, or at least not one of the prime conscious objects, of existence. The prime objects of a university may be grouped under four heads: (1) giving a general education to a large number of young people; (2) fitting students by a special training for the practise of a particular occupation or profession; (3) maintaining a body of scholars who add to the sum of human knowledge; and (4) recruiting the men who are to succeed them—for with a really great scholar the problem is not so much to teach him as to discover and stimulate him. Now for the attainment of these four objects various organs of the university have been established.

¹ Address delivered at Yale University on April 19, 1907, being the third of the annual Harvard lectures. The fund for this course of lectures was provided by an anonymous Harvard graduate. The first lecture was given in 1905 by President Eliot, and the second in 1906 by Professor George H. Palmer.