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THE PLACE OF RESEARCH IN THE COLLEGE¹

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It is a common idea, all too common, that research should be left to the universities, research institutes and the great corporations.

"The primary function of the college is to teach!" is a statement often made with misleading emphasis. All good educators agree on the dominant position of teaching in the college, but many know that teaching attains its highest degree of efficiency only when the research attitude of mind is developed in the student and a research atmosphere fostered in the institution. I know teachers whose scholarship and teaching have been vitalized by enthusiasm over their own research problems. The limited time spent on these problems paid rich dividends not measured in dollars alone.

The general misunderstanding of the true nature and the methods of research is appalling. The typical research professor is not, as so many fear, a retiring and very peculiar genius irritated by teaching duties and interested only in his own selfish problems. Instead of neglecting teaching the ideal teacher brings to his lectures the freshness of originality and gives to his words the ring of authority. There are, of course, brilliant men who have no place on a college faculty, but there are also many, ever so many, priding themselves on their exclusive attention to teaching, whose words are as dry dust in the mouth.

Pure research is sometimes damned with the triumphant question, "Of what use is it?" Let J. J. Carty, of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, give answer. "The pure scientist is the advance guard of civilization." Herbert Hoover adds, "Our whole banking community does not do the public service in a day that Faraday's discoveries do us daily." In speaking of the chemical research on coal-tar that has given the world a thousand beautiful dyes such as were never known before, indispensable medicines, liquid fuels, wood preservatives, high explosives and many other remarkable products, H. H. Gray pays a merited tribute to originality. "After all, only mind can transform the pence of coal-tar into the sovereigns of fine chemicals. Capital can draw the dividends and labor can plume itself on its indispensability, but it is mind which performs the miracle."

¹ Address given at Wittenberg College on the occasion of the dedication of the Laboratory for Chemistry.

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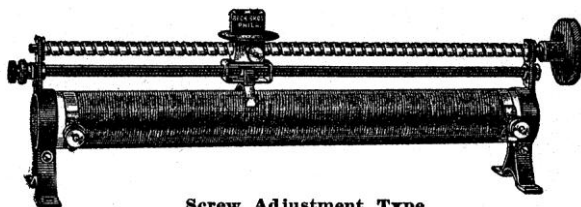
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