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RESEARCH IN COLLEGES AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS¹

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It was planned to introduce this program with a paper by Dr. John C. Merriam upon "Research as revealing an Attitude of Mind," but illness in his family prevented his being present or sending his paper.

A few college presidents and university professors have expressed the feeling that men qualified to do worthy research are rare, and that most college teachers would do well to let research alone and stick to their teaching. We who have been endeavoring to promote research in colleges have had a fundamentally different view, and it seems well to outline it briefly as a background for the discussions to follow.

We believe that every normal individual is born with some endowment of the research spirit—the inquiring mind given to trying to find out by exercise of its own powers. Normal children are full of natural curiosity and they have to a fair degree the habit of experimenting; that is, they are endowed with something of the research spirit.

We believe that this mental habit of learning by self-reliant experiment should be conserved and strengthened from the beginning throughout life. We believe that all education, from pre-kindergarten age on through the university, should have this encouragement of the spirit and habit of research as a main object. We believe that no worth-while job in life can be done with proper effectiveness in any other spirit. We believe that, in all education, learning through self-reliant experiment and exercise of individual judgment should dominate and that the habit of stopping with faith in the printed statement in the text-book should be avoided as leading to fatty degeneration of the mind and soul. We believe that teaching should be conducted only by those who have the research attitude themselves and have ability to cultivate it in their pupils.

Men with the research spirit are now available for the colleges, and from among university graduates are coming new men who, though wrongly trained in their earlier school studies, have later come into contact

¹ A series of papers arranged by the secretary of the committee on research in educational institutions, a sub-committee of the committee of one hundred of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, given at the Philadelphia meeting on December 28.

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