

Extract from Universities: American, English, German,
by A. Flexner. Oxford University Press. 1930.

P. 339

Extract consisting of a translation by E. Spranger:

"I need not urge that a modern university professor should not be blind to the social conditions of modern life. But if this idea is loosely conceived, if holidays and free hours are devoted to giving popular courses, the university as an institution of learning is imperilled, for as such it must remain a selective, aristocratic institution. The university teacher must strive upward; the spread of knowledge among the people at large he has to leave to others. To this same category belong the temptations which come to investigators in the natural and intellectual sciences from the business world. There is danger that gradually scientific literature may be regarded as just so many commercial 'orders', whose value will be determined by business considerations. The person who treads this path will soon sacrifice his scientific sense of values to a commercial or social sense of values. Indeed we live in an era characterized by a mania for 'instruction.' Every possible subject wants to win university recognition. Let us consider whether the university is best adapted to popular purposes and whether the public does not expect from disjointed lectures and courses results that cannot be thus obtained, because all the essential prerequisites are lacking."