

or of that combination of knowledge and skill which constitutes his profession, the college provides that he shall get such a complete possession of himself—in all his powers: mind, body, and that total of qualities known as “character”—as is essential to the highest success in any specialty or profession whatever. He may get this broad preparation elsewhere than in college. It may come through private study. It may come sometimes—but only to men of extraordinary endowments—from the discipline of life itself. But to the ordinary man, the “average man,” it comes most surely and most easily through a college course. Once having it, from one source or another, a man no doubt fits himself best to serve the world by perfecting his knowledge and skill in some single direction; but without some such broad preliminary development, some such “liberal education,” he will fail not only of his best possible special work, but—what is worst of all—he will assuredly fail of that best service which any man can do for the community, the living in it, whatever his profession, as a complete and roundly moulded man. He will fail (to use Mr. Spencer’s excellent phrase) of “complete living.” He will have entered the world without being equipped for that great common profession, the profession of living—underneath and above his particular calling—the intellectual life.

But (it may be asked) why may not the university, through some one of its special schools, furnish this culture without the need of a college? Because a man is too complex an organ-

ate students on special lines of study, other than those of the usual professional schools. It is to be hoped that the fact of its carrying on under-graduate college work does not indicate any danger of its being checked in its full career, through some possible unripeness of its public for its more advanced work, and warped toward an ordinary university with a college and professional schools, only.

ism to get complete growth in any single region of study, or by any one line of exercises.

But, at least (it may further be asked), might not the ideal university, with its whole circle of knowledges, professional and otherwise, give this complete culture? In other words, why should not the college add to its course all kinds of knowledges, and so itself become an ideal university, where anybody might learn everything? It is the theory implied in this question that produces the tendency toward unlimited “electives” in the college course. There should be no difficulty in seeing why this is an irrational tendency, however attractive it may seem at first sight to the public. It is irrational, because the time actually given to college study is no more than four years; in this time only a few subjects can be studied; and the very essence of the function of the college is, therefore, that it should select among the numberless possible subjects those which promise the greatest educating force. For we reach, at this point in the discussion, a fact that underlies the whole system of any right education—a fact persistently ignored by many persons having to do with educational affairs, particularly in the lower schools and in remote communities, and on the ignorance of which no end of educational blunders have been built. It is the fact that, while every possible knowledge and skill is useful for one purpose or another, *not all are equally useful for the purposes of education.* The college therefore, must select such studies as are most useful for its own purposes. So far as the university undertakes to prescribe any such general or culture-course, it becomes a college. So far as the college forgets to do this, in deference to notions of a “practical” training, or of the magnificence of a great cloud of electives, it does not become a university—for that, in the