

SCIENCE

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THE NEW YORK MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION.

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THE annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science is the chief scientific event of the year, and the meeting about to open in New York promises to be one of the most important in the history of the Association. This is guaranteed by the fact that some fifteen special scientific societies, a considerably larger number than ever before, meet with the Association, and it is definitely proved by the programs issued in advance by most of the sections and by some of the independent societies. These show that the most active men of science from all parts of the country will be present to report upon the results of their most recent researches and to take part in the discussions. It is certainly not only the duty, but also the privilege of those interested in science to use all possible efforts to be present at the meeting.

Those familiar with the history of modern science will realize the difficulties that must be met by an association seeking the advancement and diffusion of science as a whole. The question was comparatively simple when the Association was organized in 1848. Then and until 1875 the members could meet in one body and in the earlier period at least each could have an intelligent understanding of all the work presented. During this period too there was a general popular interest in science.

The applications of the principles of physics and chemistry to the living body, and the development of the doctrine of evolution awakened a lively interest, as they seemed to many to controvert not only generally accepted doctrines but even religion itself. But as heat was converted into light, as science found its due place in education and in modern life and settled down to the steady routine of laboratory and field, as each science became technical and required for economy and accuracy a special terminology, not only was there a decrease in popular interest, but the workers in one department could not be expected to be familiar with science as a whole.

The American Association has naturally reflected the progress of science. At the meetings held at Buffalo and Burlington at the close of the civil war there was an attendance of only about seventy-five members. Then the Association steadily grew until the meetings at Boston (1880), Montreal (1882) and Philadelphia (1884) were attended by about one thousand members. A stationary condition or perhaps a decline then occurred, which seems to be explained by increasing specialization and decreasing popular interest. These conditions are now being met by an adjustment to the altered environment. In 1875 separate sections were organized for the physical sciences and for natural history, and in 1882 nine sections were established, but it was not until 1893 that botany was separated from zoology. In the meanwhile separate societies have been organized for nearly all the sciences, meeting the needs of modern specialization. Some of these societies, not finding a proper place in the Association, have joined in a Christmas session, but others have chosen the time and place of the meeting of the American Association. At first it was feared that these special societies would injure the parent Association, but it was found that the simultaneous meeting of the

American Chemical Society made the section for that science the strongest in the Association. The many special societies meeting this year in New York will probably bring together more men of science and contribute more to the advancement of science than any scientific gathering ever held in America. At the same time the membership of the Association will be larger than it has ever been before.

With the approval of the Council, the local committee for the New York meeting has confined its attention to arranging for the scientific work of the sections. There is much to be said for leaving the general arrangements for the meetings in the hands of a central administration and the cost to the Association, and for abolishing free luncheons, free excursions, etc. Missionaries may be fed on charity, but business men prefer to pay their own bills. The Association can no longer hope to carry science to the houses of the people, at least not in a city such as New York, but meets to promote its own interests and the interests of its members. The fact that these interests are identical with the interests of society is certainly a reason for satisfaction and pride and should lead to the conduct of the meeting with added dignity.

The fact that the Association will be welcomed to New York by the local members rather than by the citizens of the city and that the excursions will be scientific rather than sight-seeing in character will probably not detract from the social intercourse which is one of the important functions of such meetings. Men of science wish to see and hear each other rather than on-lookers and outsiders, and they are competent to decide what they wish to see in a city such as New York. The headquarters at the Hotel Majestic overlooking Central Park, is within convenient reach of Columbia University and the American Museum of Natural History, where the

sessions will be held. There are in the neighborhood of the University numerous good boarding houses, now empty owing to the absence of students during vacation. The situation of the University with pleasant grounds overlooking the Hudson river, promises reasonable freedom from heat and dust, and ample accommodation both for social intercourse and scientific work.

The Association will be welcomed to Columbia University by President Low, long a member, at eleven o'clock on the morning of Monday, June 25th, and after brief addresses by the retiring president, Mr. G. K. Gilbert and the president-elect Professor R. S. Woodward, the members will separate for the organization of the Sections. On Monday afternoon five of the vice-presidents, Professor Asaph Hall, Jr., Professor Ernest Merritt, Professor Jas. Lewis Howe, Professor J. F. Kemp and Professor William Trelease, will give their addresses, the others being postponed until next year. President Gilbert will give his address at the American Museum of Natural History on the evening of June 26th. Various scientific excursions have been arranged by the different sections, which will be part of their scientific work. A meeting in New York City under the conditions described and at the end of June is certainly an experiment worth making, and there is every reason to believe that it will be successful.

PROGRESS OF THE NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL PARK.

AMONG the attractive features of the coming meeting of the American Association in New York are the proposed visits to the Botanical Garden and the Zoological Park. These sister institutions are developing rapidly in the northern and southern portions of Bronx Park and both deserve careful study, even in their present unfinished condition. Members of the Association de-

siring to see both parks on the same day will do well to take a Harlem train direct to Bedford Park, walk through the Botanical Garden and buildings eastward to the Bronx river, then southward along the line of the river to the Boston road entrance of the Zoological Park to the northwestern entrance, returning to New York by the Fordham station of the Harlem railroad. Members desiring especially to see the Zoological Park should take the train from 42d street or 125th street to Fordham.

The following extracts from the Fourth Annual report recently issued by the Zoological Society will give some idea of the present state of development of this project. The Zoological Park was formally opened to the public on November 8, 1899; Professor Osborn delivered the address of welcome on behalf of the Society and the Park was formally accepted by Comptroller Coler. During the inclement months of November and December it was visited by 90,000 people; the present attendance on holidays and Sundays averages between 15,000 and 17,000; the attendance since January 1st is 294,000. The Park is thus a thoroughly popular institution. The membership has risen to over 850 and is slowly increasing; a vigorous attempt is being made to raise the membership to 3000, and thus provide an income which will constantly renew the supply of animals and enable the Society to erect a building every other year.

Up to the present time \$10,000 has been expended in the purchase of animals and about \$200,000 in the construction of buildings and other installations. The following ranges and installations are now complete:

Mule Deer Range, Fallow Deer Range and House, Axis Deer Range and House, Ducks' Aviary, Flying Cage, Aquatic Birds' House, Black-tail Deer Range, Virginia Deer Range, Red Deer Range and House, Moose Range and House, Wapiti Range and House, Wolf Dens, Fox Dens, Aquatic