

SCIENCE

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IRRIGATION.¹

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SCIENCE has been defined as the medium through which the knowledge of the few can be rendered available to the many; and among the first to avail himself of this knowledge is the engineer. He has created a young science, the offspring, as it were, of the older sciences, for without them engineering could have no existence.

The astronomer, gazing through long ages at the heavens and laying down the courses of the stars, has taught the engineer where to find his place on the earth's surface.

The geologist has taught him where he may find the stones and the minerals which he requires, where he may count on firm rock beneath the soil to build on, where he may be certain he will find none.

The chemist has taught him of the subtle gases and fluids which fill all space, and has shown him how they may be transformed and transfused for his purposes.

The botanist has taught him the properties of all trees and plants, 'from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.'

And all this knowledge would be as nothing to the engineer had he not reaped the fruits of that most severe of all pure and noble sciences—the science of numbers and dimensions, of lines and curves and spaces, of surfaces and solids—the science of mathematics.

Were I to attempt in the course of a single address to touch on all the many

¹Address of the president to the Engineering Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, South Africa, 1905.