

# SCIENCE

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, PUBLISHING THE  
OFFICIAL NOTICES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 1908

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## THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NATURALISTS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS<sup>1</sup>

ON several occasions during the last few years, indeed, ever since my election to the honorable position which I occupy to-night, I have been asked "What is the use of continuing the existence of the Society of Naturalists?" When one is in the full enjoyment of an honor so greatly appreciated as that which I now enjoy it is a veritable cold douche for some well-meaning but not altogether tactful friend to suggest that the honor may after all be an empty one and that the presidential chair I occupy is that of a society so moribund that it would be a kindness to let it turn its face to the wall and enter into its eternal rest. But a cold douche may have a highly salutary effect both in tempering a too great elation and in bringing one into the proper frame of mind for considering whether, after all, there may not be force in the suggestion. Gentlemen, I have passed through these experiences, I have considered calmly and, so far as possible, impartially the condition of the society and its relations to other organizations, and a reaction has set in. My appreciation of my position is reestablished and I am now more convinced than ever before that the Society of Naturalists has still an important part to play in the advancement of scientific achievement on this continent.

The society makes for the solidarity of those sciences which, in older days, were included in the term natural history. It was originated for the purpose of pro-

<sup>1</sup> Delivered on December 31, 1907.

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