

RAILROAD RATES FOR THE BALTIMORE MEETING

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: It has been the custom for many years past to obtain a railroad rate concession for the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the affiliated societies. Formerly this was granted at one and one third—a rate, even at that time, far in excess of what could be obtained by a single professor who wished to conduct a handful of students on a geological excursion. To this rate was later added the twenty-five cents validation fee. Then came the concession of two cents per mile, for the Chicago meeting of 1907-8, a rate practically equivalent to the ordinary charges of the roads, to which must be added the validation fee. This year, the arrangements have been exceedingly liberal—one and three fifths plus the validation fee. Taking the rate from Philadelphia to Baltimore as an example: the one fare, \$2.40, and the three fifths, \$1.44, plus the validation fee, \$0.25, amount to \$4.09, a sum in excess of the regular round-trip fare of \$4.00.

I am aware that for those attending the meeting from a long distance, the rate granted *may* mean a slight reduction, but, even the scientific world is not made up of altruists, and members from the nearer localities will not pay more for their tickets than the ordinary round-trip fare, and trouble themselves besides to obtain certificates, deposit them for validation, call for them, and re-sign for the return trip—four unnecessary wastings of time—for the sake of accommodating those from a longer distance, and there is thus a possibility that the certificates presented may fall short of the required number, with the result of adding greatly to the expenses of members from a distance who put faith in the certificate plan.

I do not know, nor care to know, who is responsible for this most remarkable rate, but I do know what has been done by private individuals, and I am convinced that, with an organization so numerically strong as the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the affiliated societies at its back, the committee, if it be indued with a real desire and determination to obtain con-

cessions that are worth while, will never again offer to the most powerful scientific body of the United States, an illusory grant.

H. NEWELL WARDLE

 QUOTATIONS

HARVARD'S NEW PRESIDENT

It would appear that all the recognized demands, exacting though they are, have met satisfactory compliance in to-day's selection of a president of Harvard. Professor Lowell's attainments as a scholar, although well known for many years to the inner circle, have recently received new recognition, both in America and abroad. It is quite beyond question that his recent notable volumes on "The Government of England" have placed him first among contemporary American scholars in the field of political science. To his skill as an administrator the success of the Lowell Institute affords striking testimony, while his deep and active interest in educational questions has received proof in his effective service as a trustee of the Institute of Technology and as a member, for nine years past, of the Harvard faculty. He is a Bostonian by inheritance, by nativity, and by tradition. He is a Harvard man by education, both collegiate and professional; the university can claim no stancher allegiance than his has been. At fifty-two nature has permitted him to retain a nimbleness of mind and body which in the case of most men takes its departure at a much earlier age. Indeed, from every point of view his selection seems obvious, logical and fortunate.

The hand of the president is potent at Harvard; more so perhaps than in any sister institution. Harvard government is that of a limited monarchy, but with the right type of monarch the administration can be made to veer pretty close to the status of a benevolent despotism. To say that it has veered in this direction during the last two or three decades is the highest tribute one may pay to the consummate skill and personal power of President Eliot. But this very development, this centralization of power, influence and responsibility which the retiring Nestor among

college presidents has brought into being will serve to make his mantle fall heavily upon him who must now take it up. To bear it as it has been borne will prove no easy task.—*Boston Evening Transcript*.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

ELIOT AND THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY¹

FORTY years ago, there was chosen to the presidency of Harvard College, a young professor of chemistry, who had none of the qualities then commonly supposed to be necessary in the position which he held. He was not a clergyman, not a teacher of philosophy, not venerable and not spiritual, merely young, industrious, clear-sighted, scholarly and fearless. Harvard College was in those days only a small institution, chiefly for boys, "a respectable high school where they taught the dregs of learning," as its most popular teacher then described it. Still it was the best we had and our own "our oldest, richest and freest university," even as it is to-day.

In 1868, the young president found an institution of the old type, with some most charming and gifted professors, and others dry as dust. Its work was all elementary in character, the subjects taught were held to be of unequal value, the Greek and the Latin standing in official precedence. Of advanced study there was little, and that little existed in the unique personality of Louis Agassiz and of Asa Gray. It was essentially a boys' school, and a school of the type which forces set tasks on unwilling youth. One of the graduating class of 1873 said to the present writer, at the time that in his class there were but two men (J. W. Fewkes was the other) "who had any interest in natural history or in anything else." Doubtless this was an exaggerated statement, but it represented fairly the attitude of the college boy in those days of prescribed courses and text-book recitations in elementary subjects. In those days, too, the professional schools had no foundation in science or in culture, and the instruction given in them was guiltless of pedagogic methods or

¹"University Administration," by Charles W. Eliot, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Co.

ideals. In almost all departments of Harvard College advanced education was a grind rewarded by a degree. The degree was a badge of social and intellectual achievement, not a disclosure of the secret of power.

To change all this was not an easy task, and the young president had grown middle-aged before the greater part of his work was achieved. He rightly interpreted his position as representing in no sense a fact accomplished. It was of necessity a continuous struggle; a struggle for greater means, for better men and for higher ideals. An American university is never finished.

Fortunately for himself and for the nation, Dr. Eliot has lived to wear out all opposition; he has seen Harvard College made over after his own fashion, and he has seen it lead the race in a long procession of institutions, one and all endeavoring to follow in its trail. The various impulses of originality in other institutions, notably those originating with Andrew D. White, at Cornell, and with Daniel C. Gilman, at Johns Hopkins, have been absorbed by Harvard, and in general carried to the greatest success yet possible under American conditions. To Cornell we owe originally the doctrine of the democracy of studies, the idea that no one shall say which subject or which discipline is best until we know the man on whom it is to be tried. To Johns Hopkins we owe the idea that advanced work in any subject has a greater culture value than elementary work in the same or other subjects. Both these doctrines have found their place in the elective system at Harvard.

In the lectures on university administration at Northwestern University, President Eliot explains in detail, in simple undramatic fashion, the plan of his work at Harvard, its methods and its results. That the most successful of college administrators should regard the methods which he has himself used as typical and desirable, is natural enough. If other methods had seemed better, he was perfectly free to use them. This volume is therefore an exposition of what Harvard actually is, and the reasons why it is so, in so far as these depend on administrative methods of