

SCIENCE

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THE BROADER ASPECTS OF RESEARCH IN
TERRESTRIAL MAGNETISM¹

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It has become the custom—fortunately or unfortunately as the case may be—that the retiring presiding officers talk on a particular subject, announced some time ahead, instead of being permitted to indulge in merely general reviews, as is the case in some organizations. Before I had a chance to think definitely on the matter, request was received from the permanent secretary four months ago that the title be furnished him at the earliest possible moment.

My original desire was to have the opportunity of talking to you on some more general subject than the one I have finally chosen. The topic, magnetism in general—a review of our fundamental ideas, the status of researches on the question “What is a Magnet”—appealed to me strongly. In connection with my researches in terrestrial magnetism, I have naturally been obliged to look occasionally out beyond and raise questions on the general problem of magnetism. When not only the permanent secretary, but the secretary of this section and the present chairman, began to make inquiries as to my subject, I had to settle upon something. And when I turned to your chairman for assistance in coming to a decision, and submitted to him several topics, *e. g.*, “The General Problem of Magnetism,” “The Physical Bearing of Problems of Terrestrial Magnetism,” etc., he indicated his preference for one relating

¹Address as retiring vice-president and chairman of Section B (Physics), American Association for the Advancement of Science, given at Minneapolis, Minn., December 29, 1910.