

SCIENCE

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THE HUMANIZATION OF THE TEACHING
OF MATHEMATICS¹

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WHEN the distinguished chairman of your mathematical conference did me the honor to request me to speak to you, he was generous enough, whether wisely or unwisely, to leave the choice of a subject to my discretion, merely stipulating that, whatever the title might be, the address itself should bear upon the professional function of those men and women who are engaged in teaching mathematics in secondary schools. Inexpertness, it has been said, is the curse of the world; and one may, not unnaturally, feel some hesitance in undertaking a task that might seem to resemble the rôle of a physician when, as sometimes happens, he is called upon to treat a patient whose health and medical competence surpass his own. I trust I am not wanting in that natural feeling. In the present instance two considerations have enabled me to overcome it. One of them is that, having had some experience in teaching mathematics in secondary schools, I might, it seemed to me, regard that experience, though it was gained more than a score of years ago, as giving something like a title to be heard in your counsels. The other consideration is that, in regard to the teaching of mathematics, whether in secondary schools or in colleges, I have acquired a certain conviction, a pretty firm conviction, which, were it properly presented, you would doubtless be generous enough and perhaps ingenious

¹ MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to the Editor of SCIENCE, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

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