

SCIENCE

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NATIONAL ACADEMIES AND THE PROGRESS OF RESEARCH

III. THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES¹

IN previous papers of this series² we have traced the development of European academies and observed the powerful influence they have exercised on the advancement of research; we have watched the beginnings of scientific investigation in the United States, and their public recognition by act of Congress establishing the National Academy of Sciences; and we have followed the history of the Academy during the half century which has elapsed since its origin. In view of the great part which academies have played in the past, and the fact that the rapid development of original research in this country has carried us out of the pioneer period, the National Academy now faces an exceptional opportunity to impress its influence upon the future scientific work of the United States. But if it enjoys an opportunity, it also faces a duty, imposed upon it by its national charter and by its position as the sole representative of

¹ This paper was presented at the Baltimore meeting of the National Academy in November, 1913. By action of the council, a manuscript copy was subsequently sent by the home secretary to each member of the academy for criticism and comment. In preparing the paper for publication, the author has had the advantage of seeing these replies. Except for a few minor verbal changes, the text is printed in its original form, with the addition of new paragraphs in square brackets.

² I. "The Work of European Academies," SCIENCE, 38, 681, 1913. II. "The First Half Century of the National Academy of Sciences," SCIENCE, 39, 189, 1914.