

SCIENCE

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FIRST GET THE FACTS¹

CONTENTS

<i>First Get the Facts: THE HONORABLE WILLIAM C. REDFIELD</i>	39
<i>Mineral Production in 1915</i>	46
<i>The Pacific Coast Meeting of the American Association</i>	48
<i>Appointments at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research</i>	49
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	49
<i>University and Educational News</i>	55
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:—</i>	
<i>Elementary Mechanics: PROFESSORS W. S. FRANKLIN AND BARRY MACNUTT. The Pre-Wisconsin Glacial Drift in the Boston Basin: R. PRESTON WENTWORTH. A Serious New Wheat Rust in this Country: M. A. CARLETON</i>	56
<i>Scientific Books:—</i>	
<i>Shapley's Study of the Orbits of Eclipsing Binaries: PROFESSOR JOEL STEBBINS. Dall's Index to the Museum Botenianum: PROFESSOR G. D. HARRIS</i>	59
<i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences: PROFESSOR EDWIN BIDWELL WILSON</i>	61
<i>Notes on Meterology and Climatology: CHARLES F. BROOKS</i>	63
<i>Special Articles:—</i>	
<i>A Culture Difference between the Pima and Papago Indians: MARY LOIS KISSELL</i>	66
<i>The American Chemical Society: DR. CHARLES L. PARSONS</i>	67

THERE is connected with the Department of Commerce a remarkable institution called the Bureau of Standards. Its work is more or less familiar to you because one or more groups of students from this school have visited it at various times. I have on some occasions spoken of this bureau as the "house of accuracy," for in it in a special sense the truth is sought. We call the seeking of this kind of truth research. It may be chemical research or physical research or the act of research applied to any of the sciences that underlie our industries and public utilities. Truth is sought in this work because it is believed that the facts concerning nature are of infinite value to mankind. It is recognized that the effectiveness of our civilization rests upon facts first ascertained and then used. It is there thought faulty to proceed on the basis of incomplete truth or of undigested facts, and neither time, labor, nor expense is spared to find the facts and make them known to those who can use them.

One of the standards of the Bureau of Standards itself must be that of speaking the truth so far as it shall have become known, and men know they may depend upon what it says as expressing the truth within those limits in which it has been ascertained. To tell half of a truth if the other half were known would be thought a destructive violation of the very *raison d'être* of the service. To know the truth and not to tell it would be equally violative.

In what has been thus far said I have

MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

¹ Address of The Honorable William C. Redfield, Secretary of Commerce, before the Case School of Applied Science, Cleveland, Ohio, May 27, 1915.