

I have listened to papers presented to the Mathematical Society, which were wholly unintelligible to me, and I learned on inquiry on one occasion that two of the foremost mathematicians in the country, who were present, were equally in the dark. Such exhibits are often presented by men who are ambitious to say something, and who have nothing of any importance to say. It is difficult to give advice to them, it is a somewhat delicate matter, but they need advice. Many technical details which are not only proper, but necessary in a published paper, may be omitted in the oral presentation of that paper. Any person of ordinary good sense should know how to adapt an oral presentation to an audience.

There is a growing tendency among a certain class of scientific men, to lose all interest in everything outside of their own narrow horizons. This is much to be regretted. But such men have their remedy in their own hands. No one can object to the formation of physical or chemical societies, but it is to be hoped that we are not all so limited in our horizons that we shall advise academies of science to cease to exist.

FRANCIS E. NIPHER

A PROPOSED ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

At the Philadelphia meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science about twenty men interested in ecology met informally on the evening of December 30, 1914, to consider the advisability of organizing an American Ecological Society. The immediate occasion for the conference was an expression of feeling on the part of Professor R. H. Wolcott and Professor V. E. Shelford to the effect that there is now no adequate opportunity for plant and animal ecologists to meet together, and also that there is for ecologists an urgent need of summer field meetings in addition to the present winter meetings.

The conference was attended by Messrs. Adams, Bartlett, Blodgett, Bray, Cannon, Cowles, Dachnowski, Griggs, Harshberger, Hill, Jennings, MacDougall, Nichols, Pearse, Shantz, Shelford, Shreve, Taylor and Wolcott,

Professor Harshberger being selected chairman. The opinion was practically unanimous that the time is ripe for the organization of an Ecological Society, and it was voted, in connection with the Columbus meeting of the American Association, to call a conference of all ecologists interested in the formation of such a society. A committee was appointed to call such a conference and present a scheme of organization, the committee consisting of Professor J. W. Harshberger (chairman), Professor V. E. Shelford (vice-chairman), Professor H. C. Cowles (secretary-treasurer), Professor R. H. Wolcott, Professor Charles C. Adams, Dr. Forrest Shreve.

Announcement will be made later of the exact time and place of the Columbus conference, but it may be assumed that it will not be earlier than Tuesday, December 28, nor later than Thursday, December 30, 1915. The purpose of this early announcement is to give ample opportunity for full expression of opinion. It is hoped that all working ecologists will write to the undersigned, noting (1) whether the proposed society is favored or disfavored and why, and (2) whether attendance at the Columbus conference is to be expected.

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GREENE VARDIMAN BLACK

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Will you permit me to call attention to the death of Dean Greene Vardiman Black? He was a figure of world-wide importance. Even before he was called to the deanship of Northwestern University Dental School he had established an international reputation as a man of science, and I think it fair to say that no man in his time—perhaps in any time—has done more to advance his profession.

He brought to his work a broad general and sound scientific training. He had the natural equipment of a man of science. It was his research work which developed and practically gave to the world the amalgam of to-day. He was the inventor of one of the first cord driven, foot power, dental engines. His scientific contributions number nearly one thousand.