

SCIENCE

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CONTENTS

The American Association for the Advancement of Science:—

Specialization and Research in the Medical Sciences: DR. FREDERICK P. GAY 25

Research in Industrial Laboratories: DR. RAYMOND F. BACON, DR. C. E. K. MEES, PROFESSOR W. H. WALKER, PROFESSOR M. C. WHITAKER, DR. W. R. WHITNEY 34

Scientific Events:—

The Control of Tuberculosis in France; The National Parks Conference; A French National Physical Laboratory; Dedication of the New York State Museum 39

Scientific Notes and News 41

University and Educational News 43

Discussion and Correspondence:—

A Case of Synchronic Behavior in Phalangidæ: PROFESSOR H. H. NEWMAN. *The Supposed Synchronal Flashing of Fireflies:* PHILIP LAURENT. *Trimmed Magazines and Efficiency Experts:* H. P. 44

Scientific Books:—

Die Kultur der Gegenwart: PROFESSOR G. F. HULL 45

Special Articles:—

Peanut Mosaic: DR. J. A. MCCLINTOCK.... 47

The American Association for the Advancement of Science:—

Section C—Chemistry: DR. JOHN JOHNSTON. 48

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE SPECIALIZATION AND RESEARCH IN THE MEDICAL SCIENCES¹

MODERN scientists are not encouraged and are become less inclined, except in the afterglow of an active life, to indulge in metaphysics. The visualization of material phenomena, particularly when set in motion by deliberate experiment and observed in their successive stages, tends to replace speculation as to a more complete, though less verifiable series of facts. This reliance in the natural sciences on observation and experiment rather than on ratiocination is responsible for the great and rapidly increasing body of useful knowledge we possess.

Philosophical treatises by even conspicuous representatives of the natural sciences have seemed to me to differ from those of the metaphysicians in that the former apparently fail to appreciate that the metaphysical game is played subject to certain rules which have the same purpose of order as the rules in other games. Philosophy is apparently a subject like fine arts, about which many people think they have intuitional knowledge. We judge pictures as bad or good not on the basis of certain criteria that have come through the ages to be recognized as essential, but in accordance with whether we like or dislike them. In the same way we may think, because we have a certain facility in the exposition of scientific data, that we can offhand write

¹ Address of the vice-president and chairman of Section K, American Association for the Advancement of Science, New York meeting, December 29, 1916.

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