

SCIENCE

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

THE FUTURE OF THE SIGMA XI¹

IN a few weeks it will be thirty-one years since some students of Cornell University, feeling the injustice of the old-fashioned kind of education that gave all its honors, all its encouragement to the students of the liberal arts, planned an honor society in the sciences. They thought, as most of us now think, that not all of good was confined to Latin and Greek, that there was also merit in the natural sciences, that the student of geology or of engineering was as deserving of honors and of encouragement as the student of the classics. As they walked home from the commencement where the honors of Phi Beta Kappa had been liberally bestowed, they conceived a society that would recognize in an equal way the merits of the bachelor of science. And the Sigma Xi was born.

But higher education in America, as in all nations, has developed much since those days, and that exponent of the liberal education of those days has also changed. The Sigma Xi of 1886 would find little encouragement in most of our universities to-day, and we of the Sigma Xi may justly claim some of the credit for that change. The classical education of fifty years ago has but few proponents to-day, for science is now recognized as an essential part of any liberal education.

Perhaps some of us are claiming too much for science in education; I half believe that we are. When I received my bachelor degree, a good many years ago, my commencement speech was a diatribe on Latin and

¹ An address delivered to the initiates of the Yale chapter of the Sigma Xi, April 2, 1917.