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A BASIS FOR RECONSTRUCTING BOTANICAL EDUCATION

THE pages of a leading English botanical journal have, for over a year past, in every issue, contained letters and articles discussing botanical reconstruction and the need of it.¹ One of the foremost American universities has recently sent out a questionnaire asking for opinions and suggestions bearing on the reconstruction of general biological instruction within the college; and the National Research Council has invited constructive ideas as to what should be the content of an "intensive" course of study. The same topic is being discussed in addresses and magazine articles in America. Davis has recently called attention to the importance of the question in SCIENCE,² as has also Peirce, in his recent address before the San Francisco Bay Section of the Western Society of Naturalists.³

But how shall we decide the content of the introductory course? Something more is needed than mere personal opinion based on the peculiar experiences, and idiosyncrasies, and limitations of individuals. The question is larger than the subject of botany, for it includes the broad problems of educational policy and theory. First of all, then, certain basic principles must be formulated and, if possible, agreed upon. It is the aim of this paper to state, and briefly discuss, two or three of these principles.

One might think that, after all that has been said and printed on the subject, one need

¹ "The Reconstruction of Elementary Botanical Teaching," *New Phytologist*, 16, 241-252, December, 1917; 17, each issue, January-December, 1918.

² Davis, Bradley Moore, "Botany After the War," SCIENCE, N. S., 48, 514-515, November 22, 1918.

³ Peirce, George J., "What Kinds of Botany Does the World Need Now?" SCIENCE, N. S., 49, 81-84, January 24, 1919.