

SCIENCE

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THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE IN THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE¹

It is certainly within the recollection of the youngest member of Section O that the attachment of the designation *Agricultural* at once removed the matter under discussion from the scientific field. Agricultural botany, agricultural physics, agricultural chemistry, and the other agriculturals were simply the reflections of the glories of the pure sciences into the dark, unfathomed caves of everyday living. No real botanist would study the corn plant. No real chemist would waste his time on its chemical composition. The physics of the soil was certainly beneath the physicist. Such lights in the darkness as Darwin, Liebig and Pasteur (whose great work was done with domesticated plants and animals, soils and industries agricultural in the broad sense) failed to sensitize the blind spots in the minds of the pure scientists of yesterday. To-day this situation no longer exists, not so much because of any change in the sciences themselves, but more because of the sensitization of the blind spots in the minds of those who devote themselves to scientific study.

This change has come about largely as the result of the work of the agricultural experiment stations. It is true that in the beginning much was done by workers in the stations in the name of science that was not scientific, but that has always been true, even more in the history of so-called pure science than in this period of the beginning of agricultural science. It is generally true to-day. In the beginnings of agricultural science,

¹ Abstract of the address of the vice-president and chairman of Section O, Agriculture, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Chicago, 1920.