

SCIENCE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1921.

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(a) ON SOME PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES: (b) THE WAR AGAINST THE INSECTS¹

To prepare a presidential address to be delivered before either the British or the American Association for the Advancement of Science is a very serious matter, and many eminent men have found it so. Is it not a sad thought that each year for many years there has been a man here and one over there who has had to worry for months, first as to his subject and again as to its mode of presentation? Of course, it sometimes happens that a man like Mr. Balfour over there or Dr. Eliot on this side is made president, and of course such men can write profound and charming addresses almost in their sleep, they have become so accustomed to formal functions of great importance. But the average man of science, even of presidential caliber, is a specialist, absorbed in his work, and the sudden realization that he must prepare an address which should interest all scientific men and should help to interest others in science is appalling.

I imagine that few of you have ever thought of this psychological aspect of presidential addresses. Possibly many of you never took the trouble to read a presidential address. Presidential addresses are things one is rather inclined to take for granted, and when one turns the pages of the journal *Nature* or the journal *Science* one is apt to say to oneself "That looks good; some day I must read it"; and then, after a glance at the news notes, the journal goes on file. In other words, presidential addresses demand the serious attention of the men who prepare them and of very few besides. Yet, I have never heard a presidential address before either the British Association or

¹ Address of the President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Toronto, 1921.