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# ISOLATION OR COOPERATION IN RESEARCH<sup>1</sup>

THE phrase cooperation and coordination has become a familiar slogan in a number of fields of human activity. It is the slogan of an organization of scientific men with which I am connected. But not all scientific men accept it as a desirable slogan. Some scientific men think cooperation and coordination in science not only not desirable things to promote, but positively undesirable things to attempt to bring about. Part of this difference of opinion exists because there is no unanimity of understanding of what is meant by cooperation and coordination. But part of it exists because there is an honest disagreement as to the relative value of scientific men working as isolated individuals or as groups of individuals with a more or less well-defined program of work to be achieved.

Cooperation and coordination imply a certain degree of organization, and this word also brings its uncomfortable reactions. While scientific men will agree that organization is a good thing in business and industry, in factory production and in marketing, in carrying on war and managing a fleet, some of them do not at all like the word organization used in connection with science. They say that organization is out of place in science. They say that science, like music and art, ought not to be, and can not successfully be, organized. They ask if Copernicus, Galileo, Faraday, Darwin and Einstein could have been "organized." I am sure the answer is that they could not. Which is not at all to say, however, that much scientific work can not be advantageously organized, nor many scientific workers much aided by cooperating and coordinating measures. Even the Darwins can be helped by organized measures to remove material obstacles from their path; measures to relieve them of all distracting and wasteful exertions so that all their time and energy can be concentrated on their great adven-

There are about six thousand professional working biologists in this country. But how many are Darwins? There are about seven hundred fellows and members of this society, but how many Hagens, Harrises, Walshs and Fitchs are there among us? That is to ask, how many of us scientific men are

<sup>1</sup> Annual public address before the Entomological Society of America, December 30, 1925, Kansas City, Missouri.

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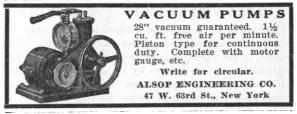
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