

SCIENCE

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CONTENTS

<i>The American Association for the Advancement of Science:</i>	
<i>The Intellectual Worker:</i> DR. WILLIAM MACDONALD	317
<i>Problems of a Scientific Investigator:</i> DEAN BYRON CUMMINGS	321
<i>Cooperation in Research:</i> DR. FRANK E. E. GERMANN	324
<i>Eric Knight Jordan:</i> PROFESSOR ALBERT GUERARD	327
<i>Scientific Events:</i>	
<i>The International Electrotechnical Commission; An Eastern Section of the Seismological Society; Work of the Committee on the Atmosphere and Man; Expeditions of the American Museum; The Daniel Giraud Elliot Medal</i>	327
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	330
<i>University and Educational Notes</i>	333
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:</i>	
<i>The Life History of a Fake:</i> PROFESSOR CHARLES W. HARGITT. <i>The S. T. Darling Memorial Prize:</i> PROFESSOR TH. MADSEN. <i>Special Characters for the Typewriter:</i> EDWARD PIERCE HULSE. <i>The Distribution of Hymenophyza Pubescens:</i> B. A. WALPOLE	334
<i>Quotations:</i>	
<i>A British Science News Service</i>	335
<i>Scientific Books:</i>	
<i>Stratton's Astronomical Physics:</i> DR. RALPH E. WILSON. <i>Campbell's Bats, Mosquitoes and Dollars:</i> DR. TRACY I. STORER	336
<i>Special Articles:</i>	
<i>Application of the Generic Name of Phyllocoenia:</i> DR. T. WAYLAND VAUGHAN. <i>A Neglected Capillarity Effect:</i> F. M. DENTON	338
<i>The American Society for Experimental Pathology:</i> DR. E. B. KRUMBHAAR	339
<i>Science News</i>	x

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THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE¹

THE INTELLECTUAL WORKER

IN an address delivered in New York on December 1, 1925, at the annual meeting of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Secretary Hoover deplored the backward state of research in pure science in this country and made an earnest plea for greater financial encouragement of that important form of intellectual activity.

It is unfortunately true [he said] that we can claim no such rank in pure science research as that which we enjoy in the field of industrial research. . . . A list of the awards of the Nobel prizes to men of various nationalities reveals the small proportion of first minds that we support. . . . We have in recent years developed our industrial research upon a scale hitherto unparalleled in history. We have an increase in some ten years from one hundred to over five hundred laboratories engaged upon research for applications of known scientific fact and law. These results have been magnificent. But all these applied science laboratories are dependent upon the raw material which flows from the laboratories and men engaged in pure science, and the industrial investigators are the first to demand more support to pure science. . . . The sudden growth of industrial laboratories has in itself endangered pure science research by drafting the personnel of pure science into their ranks, depleting at the same time not only our fundamental research staff, but also our university faculties, and thus to some degree drying the stream of creative men at the source. Compared with other expenditures of far less importance to human welfare, the amount of money annually devoted in the United States to the aid of investigators and investigation is absurdly small. It is less than one tenth what we spend for cosmetics.

Secretary Hoover might well have extended his criticism and comparisons, had the occasion been appropriate, to other fields than that commonly designated by the term science. The fields of history, economics, political science, jurisprudence and philosophy, in all of which the accepted principles of scientific method more or less apply, show an equal paucity of work of high and fundamental character. The average dissertation which is accepted by American universities in history, economics or political science as a part of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy is often appreciably below

¹ Papers presented at a general session of the association at Kansas City, on December 31, organized under the auspices of the committee of one hundred on scientific research.

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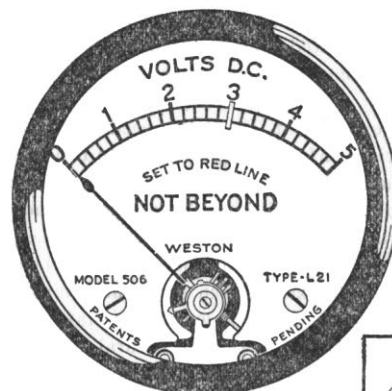
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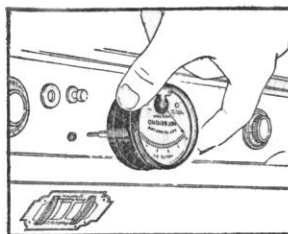
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