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THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF INITIATION OF RESEARCH IN THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON¹

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THE founding of the Carnegie Institution of Washington was of peculiar significance as an influence turning attention toward advancement of knowledge, as contrasted with its restatement or transmission. The establishing of an agency for this specific purpose did not indicate that such activities were considered either more or less important than educational work. It presented rather a coordinate or supplementary program, which would naturally gear itself closely to that of institutions designed initially for the work of education, or for other special applications of knowledge.

A group of the principal departments originated in 1904. Among them were Terrestrial Magnetism, Mount Wilson Observatory and Experimental Evolution. The last of these formed the basis for development of the present department of genetics. In the history of the institution many types of organization have been used, and there have been numerous changes in statement of program. So the contribution of Mrs. Harriman, through gift of the Eugenics Record Office with its generous endowment, led in 1921 to union of eugenics and experimental evolution in the Department of Genetics.

In somewhat similar manner the Division of Plant Biology, established in 1928, shaped itself to embrace the work of six sections, including physiology of growth, photosynthesis or the utilization of solar energy by the plant, classification and its relation to heredity and environment, studies on the influence of aridity, the section concerned with relationships to environment, and one devoted to the history of plants.

Development of the institution illustrates what have seemed to be the needs of organization in attempting to secure the largest measure of return in investigation. Recognition of research as in itself an essential human activity had not attained the wide acceptance of the present decade, and much of the effort of the institution was given to support of investigation wherever opportunity might be found. The interest of Mr. Carnegie in discovery of genius or the exceptional man found expression in numerous spe-

¹ Addresses given at Cold Spring Harbor, May 31, 1929, Dr. Henry S. Pritchett, vice-president of the board of trustees, presiding.

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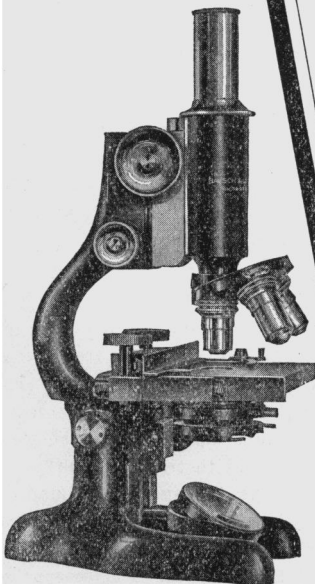
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