

# SCIENCE

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## A CHEMIST'S RETROSPECTS AND PERSPECTIVES<sup>1</sup>

By Dr. RICHARD WILLSTÄTTER

MUNICH

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Chicago Section of the American Chemical Society, Ladies and Gentlemen: Allow me to express my heartiest gratitude for the great honor you have conferred upon me by the award of the Willard Gibbs Medal. At the same time, let me express my deep appreciation to the entire American Chemical Society for having elected me their honorary member at the occasion of my last visit to your country six years ago. With a feeling of deep emotion, I accept the medal which carries the image of that upright and profound character, your great J. Willard Gibbs.

It is the third time that this high distinction has been conferred by your jury on a foreign chemist. I am facing, thus, a great and distinguished assembly

<sup>1</sup> Address on the occasion of the presentation of the Willard Gibbs Medal of the Chicago Section of the American Chemical Society for distinguished achievement in science, Chicago, September 13.

to most of whom I am rather a stranger. Not to all of you, however, as there are a certain number of American chemists, who have gone forth from my laboratory and some of whom occupy leading positions in American universities—for instance, at Urbana and in your industry, for example, with the du Pont Company. However, I do not feel like a total stranger; for it is a privilege of the scientist to find friends in every country of the globe, wherever he sets his foot. This is my feeling in your midst.

At any rate, as I do not want to remain a stranger to you, I think I may best introduce myself by presenting some of my scientific memories and ideas. I have been studying chemistry for the last forty-three years; thus, I can look back on two generations of organic chemistry, the development of which is reflected on a small scale in my life.

In my younger days, chemistry was dominated by

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