

SCIENCE

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FUTURE OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES¹

By Dr. W. R. WHITNEY
GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY

INTRODUCTION

THE promising study of mankind is man. I want to direct your thoughts with that in mind, under the title, "Accomplishments and Future of Physical Science."

This means a hurried view of a lot of territory with an eastern horizon at sunrise. Any single picture would be inadequate. If I could make a "movie" of many frames taken through an open mind, you would still not distinguish science, but only a moving blur. Really to see things, we need about a twenty-fifth of a second per frame. Science moves much faster than

¹ Address given on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Sigma Xi, Cornell University, June 20, 1936.

that. So any picture of accomplishments is neutral gray, much as newspapers appear feeding rapidly from a printing-press.

I shall select unrelated and peculiar pictures which do not seem to blend. By my poor lighting I lose detail, and by speed I spoil clearness. Perhaps also most important things are left out—spiritual things—but science is still a little confused there.

See first the animal itself, forced to experiment in order to keep alive. He tries, tests and names everything, but apparently creates nothing at all. He may never create, but he may continually put discoveries together in new ways. The log which saved him from drowning has become the steamship of to-day. His magic for keeping the wolf from the door—those pic-

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Leaves

Metabolism—Food Synthesis

Roots

Absorption of Water and Inorganic Salts

Stems

Growth and Movement

Flowers

Fruits, Seeds, and Seedlings

Metabolism—The Catabolic Phase. Digestion—Respiration—Fermentation

II. The Plant Groups

The Classification of Plants

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