NEW SOCIETIES AND SHIFTING INTERESTS

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THE history of the American Association for the Advancement of Science records many instances in which that organization has laid foundations on which a new scientific society has been built up in some special field, and illustrates also that in the passing years it has shown that plasticity and power to change readily and effectively which characterizes successful organisms. The approaching meeting at Indianapolis brings to mind one episode in the history of the association which deserves recounting at this time. This is its relations to the American Microscopical Society, which at Indianapolis will be meeting in the same city in which it was organized sixty years ago next summer. At the foundation of the movement which led to the organization of that society, the American Association played so large a part that it may rightly be regarded as the parent society here as it has been in many other cases.

In the 1870's and 80's the country saw the establishment of many local natural history clubs devoted to the field study of biology. At about the same time there arose another series of societies devoted to the study of the microscope and its revelations of the minute in life. Hardly one of the larger cities was without its microscopical society locally famed for its journal and an annual exhibition of apparatus and mounted specimens. Among the mid-western states Indiana displayed general enthusiasm for developing public interest in natural history through such local clubs, museums and societies.

Indianapolis was the natural center for such activities in the state, and the local interest had been stimulated by a very successful meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held there in 1871, of which more later. Seeking to arouse wider interest and to promote the advancement of microscopical science, the Indianapolis Lyceum of Natural History in May, 1877, addressed the various microscopical societies in the United States regarding the formation of a national organization in this field. The receipt of numerous favorable replies led to the circulation of a call for an organization meeting at Indianapolis in August, 1878.

This gathering, which was designated the National Microscopical Congress, extended its sessions over five days—August 14 to 19. Fifty delegates were present from some 40 microscopical societies, distributed over the country from the eastern seaboard to the Pacific coast. Four days were needed to complete the program of papers covering a wide variety of subjects and an inspection of instruments and specimens. The interest manifested was such that it was then decided to perfect the formal organization of a national society. A constitution was adopted, officers elected, and the body adjourned to meet in Buffalo a year later. To this organization was given the name of the American Society of Microscopists. However, the congress at Indianapolis has regularly been regarded as the first meeting of the society and is so listed in its early publications. The name persisted in the form just given until the organization met in Washington, D. C., in August, 1891. At the close of that meeting it was incorporated in the District of Columbia under the name of the American Microscopical Society and has carried this designation since that time.

Dr. Richard Halsted Ward, of Troy, N. Y., served as president of the National Microscopical Congress at Indianapolis in 1878 and at its close was elected as first president also of the newly established American Society of Microscopists. Reluctant to remain in office, he resigned, but the members refused to accept his withdrawal and he served the new society at its first meeting held at Buffalo the following summer. The society in making this choice was no doubt influenced by the fact that Dr. Ward had been active in the section on microscopy in the American Association, which had manifested for several years marked interest in this relatively new field of science.

A rereading of the older records shows clearly that the American Association had already taken an active part in developing the field of microscopy. The proceedings of the Salem, Massachusetts (1869), meeting record that the local committee sent out in May a *Special Circular to Persons Interested in the Use of the Microscope.* This circular announced that in order to encourage the use of the microscope, suitable rooms would be provided for an exhibition of microscopes, old and new, accessories, test objects and other related scientific materials. Several pages in the proceedings of the Salem meeting are devoted to a brief description of these exhibits in a report signed by Edwin Bicknell, "Secretary of the sub-section of Microscopy." This sub-section was probably established by the standing committee of the association, which had authority for such action, though I have found no printed record to verify my surmise.

In the Proceedings of the Troy (N. Y.) meeting in 1870, the constitution as printed provided for a subsection on (3) Microscopy under Section A, which included otherwise (1) Mathematics and Astronomy,

(2) Physics and Chemistry. This volume contains an extended report on the microscopes and microscopical apparatus exhibited at the meeting. The report begins, "In accordance with the custom initiated at the Salem meeting," so one may safely consider the Salem exhibit and discussion as the start in the formal development of microscopy under the auspices of the American Association. The report was signed by R. H. Ward, secretary of subsection on microscopy.

This subsection appears again in the constitution printed in the *Proceedings* of the Indianapolis meeting in 1871. The list of officers for that meeting includes a sectional committee as well as chairman and secretary for this subsection and the last paper in the printed volume is entitled "On Uniformity of Nomenclature in Regard to Microscopical Objectives and Oculars," by R. H. Ward. But I have found no further evidence of sessions, programs or an exhibition on that occasion.

At that period subsections appear to have been temporary and were called into service only occasionally. In the following meeting at Dubuque, this was the only subsection to hold a session and have a program. Dr. Ward was chairman. At Portland in 1873 officers were listed but no activities recorded. A new constitution was promulgated at Hartford in 1874, and no mention of microscopy appeared anywhere in the new document or in the records of the meeting. But the recently developed interest, though eliminated for the moment, was only temporarily suppressed. A year later (1875) in the record of the meeting at Detroit is found the brief statement, "Informal action was taken by a number of members specially interested in Microscopy, in favor of the formation at the next meeting of a Subsection or Association Club similar to that of the Entomologists" just organized there.

Accordingly, the account of the Buffalo meeting held in 1876 records that under Section A a permanent subsection on microscopy was organized, with R. H. Ward as chairman and E. W. Morley as secretary. Some papers were read and general interest in the work of the subsection awakened. Elsewhere it is stated that the Buffalo Microscopical Club held meetings during the week to which those interested were invited.

At Nashville in 1877 the permanent subsection on microscopy was in full swing. Again at St. Louis in 1878 this subsection had its place; its officers were listed and the titles of papers read appear in the program. This activity was shown, despite the separate meeting at Indianapolis in that year and the organization of a special society. However, a shift in emphasis was soon apparent.

The subsection on microscopy when first organized in 1869 and immediately thereafter concerned itself primarily with principles of optics and improvements in apparatus and methods. It was accordingly subordinated to Section A, which dealt with physics, mathematics, etc. Later the programs embraced more and more papers on biological topics, to which the sectional programs were entirely devoted at Boston in 1880 and Cincinnati in 1881. Before the latter meeting the constitution had been again revised and nine sections replaced the earlier two. Here Section G, Histology and Microscopy, replaced the older subsection and functioned actively until at the Ann Arbor meeting in 1885 it was fused with Section F, Biology, and the title Microscopy disappeared from the schedule of the American Association.

For ten or a dozen years after the organization of the separate microscopical society, its programs included much material on apparatus and methods. Gradually the development of apparatus passed into the hands of inventors and manufacturers and as the field of investigation broadened, methods were particularized and lost wide general interest. Hence this material also was left out. So to-day the work of the American Microscopical Society centers around the material studied rather than apparatus or methods.

OBITUARY

WILL SCOTT

April 20, 1877, to October 17, 1937

DR. SCOTT'S early academic training at Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, qualified him as a high-school teacher, and for several years he taught in the New Augusta and Bloomington high schools. His first association with Indiana University came in 1902, when he enrolled in the summer session at the Biological Station and which he subsequently attended each summer until 1907. He received the A.B. and A.M. degrees in 1908 and the Ph.D. degree in 1911. His first university appointment, as a fellow in zoology engaged in a study of cave plankton, was granted in 1907, and from that time until his death he held the following university positions: instructor, 1908–1911; assistant professor, 1911–1919; associate professor, 1919–1921; professor, 1921–1937. He was appointed director of the Biological Station in 1920. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, American Society of Zoologists, Ecological Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Indiana Academy of Science. He served as president of the Indiana Academy of Science in 1935.

Dr. Scott's first scientific publication was an "Eco-