Edmund Ware Sinnott: President of AAAS, 1948

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IT MAY SEEM STRANGE TO SOME that a noted botanist should express concern about the human species, not only as a mechanism of physical, chemical, and biological properties, but also as an individual having spiritual values and needs. Such an awareness is merely the evidence of a frank recognition that the world is sick and that science alone is not enough. Such a credo, though Dr. Sinnott would scarcely use the word, helps us to understand the many facets of the man who at present is head of Yale's Sheffield Scientific School, an institution now devoted exclusively to graduate work. Concerned with graduate study and recognizing its paramount importance to mankind, besides being a famous investigator in his own right, Director Sinnott neither overlooks nor minimizes the undergraduate curriculum. He would have college students study both the broad aspects of science and the fundamental structures of the humanities.

The new president of the AAAS got off to a flying start by being born in the environs of Harvard University on February 5, 1888. Sinnott was graduated from Harvard in 1908, took his Master's degree two years later, and was awarded the Ph.D. in 1913. During these years at Harvard, he held in turn the positions of Austin teaching fellow and assistant in botany, Sheldon traveling fellow for botanical research in Australasia, and instructor in wood technology. He served as professor of botany and genetics at Connecticut Agricultural College (1915–28), held a similar position at Columbia (1928–40), was appointed Sterling professor of botany and chairman of the department at Yale (1940), and became director of the Sheffield Scientific School in 1945. Sinnott has thus been associated with the traditions of great educational institutions, and this is not only a distinction but also a heritage and a challenge. That he has won the approval and admiration of his fellow scientists is attested by his election to the presidency of one of the great scientific organizations of the world.

Professor Sinnott has previously been honored, particularly by biologists, upon numerous occasions. He was starred in the third edition of *American men of science.* He has served as president of the Botanical Society of America (1937), the American Society of Naturalists (1945), and the Torrey Botanical Club (1931–34). He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, American Philosophical Society, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He served for 7 years as a member of the board of managers of the New York Botanical Garden and for 6 years as editor-in-chief of the *American Journal of Botany.*

Sinnott has been at Yale only since 1940, but he has already accomplished enough to win a botanical medal of honor, if such an award existed. In addition to the positions just enumerated, he is director of the Marsh Botanical Gardens, of the Osborn Botanical Laboratory, and of the University's Division of Sciences. The staff of the Department of Botany has trebled, graduate students in botany have greatly increased in number, and cooperative relations between the department and such institutions as the Forestry School and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station have reached a high plane of success. In 1946, teaching and research in microbiology increased to such an extent that the department assumed the title of Botany and Microbiology. In addition, the department now offers a course in tissue culture. Sinnott's interest in general education is shown by the establishment this year of a general biology course, in which members of the staffs of botany, zoology, and psychology participate. In the midst of these activities he has found time to revise both his textbooks, work on a manuscript for a new book, and publish 21 papers.

Perhaps Professor Sinnott is most widely known through the publication in 1925 of the *Principles of genetics,* in which Professor Dunn served as co-author. The book has since undergone several editions and has proved to be one of the two or three outstanding texts in the field of genetics. *Botany: principles and problems* also made an important contribution to the teaching and study of plant science. It is a bit difficult to label a man of Sinnott's accomplishments, but if a label must be had, he is probably properly classified as a morphologist, although he is anatomist, geneticist, botanist, teacher, and administrator as well. His recent papers on various developmental phases in the growth of cucurbits indicate that we may soon be as well acquainted with gourds as with peas. It seems indeed fitting that the honor of the Association's presidency should be accorded Professor Sinnott in the midst of his greatest usefulness to science and to education.