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Prospect and Retrospect

The new year is a good time to take a look at the past and to lay plans for the future. A year ago in this space we described our policies for the combined *Science* and *The Scientific Monthly*. At that time we expressed the hope that the number of papers in the "Articles" section (as opposed to those in the "Reports" section) would be increased and that more of the articles would be of the relatively nontechnical sort that was characteristic of the *Monthly*. It was our hope that the combined journal would be more comprehensive, interesting, and useful than either journal by itself.

Here are some of the changes that have taken place. The "Letters" section has flourished during the year and has, as we hoped when it was started in 1956, become a vigorous forum for the exchange of ideas and for debate about scientific matters of public concern; the addition of abstracts to the reports has met with general approval, both from readers and from professional abstracting journals; the regular use of subtitles for articles has given the reader a better clue to their contents; and the freer use of illustrations has added interest and appeal to the articles.

But these are all minor changes. The most important changes are in the distribution and numbers of the articles. The percentage distribution of articles in major fields was as follows: public affairs, 23 percent; physical sciences, 23 percent; biology, 21 percent; social sciences, 12 percent; history and philosophy of science, 6 percent; and, in a special category that reflects the interests of our day, radiation science (radiocarbon dating, radiobiology, fallout), 15 percent.

A comparison of *Science* in 1958 to *Science* in 1957 shows some of the quantitative changes that have taken place. The total number of articles published rose from 96 in 1957 to 133 in 1958; the number of books reviewed rose from 330 to 435; the number of reports increased only slightly, from 441 to 451.

The number of articles by major fields gives a more detailed view. In public affairs (including legislation, conservation, matters of professional interest, and education) the number of articles rose from 21 in 1957 to 30 in 1958; in physical sciences, from 21 to 31; in biological sciences (including medicine and biochemistry) the number decreased from 29 to 28; in the social sciences (including psychology, archeology, economics, and sociology) the number increased from 8 to 16; in history and philosophy of science, from 4 to 8; and in radiation science, from 13 to 20.

In general it is our impression that those of our readers who formerly took *Science* think the combination a success, but many of those who formerly took the *Monthly* do not. This is understandable, for the *Monthly* readers faced an abrupt change. Instead of getting a monthly magazine which contained a high proportion of nontechnical articles, they began getting a weekly magazine which contained both nontechnical and highly specialized articles as well as some features not included in the *Monthly*: editorials, obituary articles, news of science and government, and technical reports. In the minds of some readers, the "bad" (technical articles and reports) outweighed and perhaps obscured the "good" (nontechnical articles). At any rate, a comparison is in order. In 1957 the *Monthly* carried 57 nontechnical and 7 technical articles; in 1958 *Science* carried 85 nontechnical and 48 technical articles. So far as book reviews are concerned, the difference is more marked: the *Monthly* carried 140 reviews in 1957; *Science*, in 1958, carried 435.

What of the future? We expect that *Science* will continue to be a journal for the announcement of important scientific discoveries. In addition, we hope to publish a larger proportion of readable, nontechnical, but authoritative articles, and we plan to illustrate them more fully. We hope to achieve a better balance in the different scientific fields, both in the articles and the reports. And, in this third year of the earth satellites, we intend to give more thorough and up-to-date coverage of the events of scientific interest, both in our news and in our editorial columns.—G.DuS.