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An Editor's Quest (I)

Breathes there the scientist, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
"I'd like to publish in *Science*!"
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned
As specialized journal pages turned
Knowing his latest research has earned
A right to be ranked with the giants?
(With apologies to Sir Walter Scott)

There will of course be some individuals who are born specialists, enjoy being specialists, and are content to live and die as specialists. There are physicists, bombarded by mesons, bosons, monopoles, and quarks, who are not charmed by a world below high energy. There are biochemists, drowning enjoyably in seas of ammonium sulfate and ethidium bromide, who rapidly become saturated when exposed to the lowest concentration of Bessel functions or economic cycles. There are chemists living high on NMR peaks who disdain subjects that cannot be crystallized or lack melting points. There are paleontologists wandering around in the Pliocene epoch, perfectly happy at being millions of years behind the times.

No one in his right mind would wish to interfere with such bliss, particularly in a world fraught with nuclear missiles, stagnant economies, and grant renewals. Nevertheless, there is a function for a journal that brings together the best from all disciplines. For the scientific community it means that those involved in the common enterprise of expanding the frontiers of knowledge will be exposed to discoveries at the cutting edge of another discipline. For the research scientist it has the practical concomitant that inventive minds will often find a way for a technique or concept of one discipline to create a new frontier in a second. Chemists now use the NMR discovered by physicists; archeologists are helped by the carbon dating discovered by chemists; evolutionists use the DNA sequencing discovered by biochemists. The list could go on, but it emphasizes that no science is an island unto itself.

There is a great need for a journal to serve not only the community within its discipline but also the information flow between disciplines. *Science* has reported on and published scholarly articles in the entire spectrum from mathematics to social science, and this new editor would like to carry on that tradition and possibly improve and enlarge it. We will actively solicit those articles that are considered to be breakthroughs within a discipline, even if some of them may be difficult for the nonspecialist.

The first criterion should be excellence; within that criterion, the more general will be favored over the more particular. All things being equal (which they rarely are), an article that is comprehensible to more than one disciplinary group will be favored over one that has a more narrow focus. The more general may not always be the more important, but generality seems an appropriate goal for a multidisciplinary journal, which *Science* has been and, in my opinion, should remain.

To publish the best while providing for interdisciplinary communication, we shall attempt to make the abstracts understandable to the nonspecialist, even though the body of the article is written for the specialist. Thus we shall welcome the first announcement of a laser, a recombinant DNA, a Phillips curve, or an Oldowan chopper, even if the detailed evidence is beyond the general reader.

Next week I shall describe some procedures that are being designed to implement these general goals.—DANIEL E. KOSHLAND, JR.