

SCIENCE

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PLANTS AND PLANT CULTURE¹

THE enthusiasm resultant from the successful establishment of Botanical Abstracts by the combined efforts of all Americans interested in plants and plant culture has tended to revitalize the belief that a closer union of all scientific societies concerned with plants is a desideratum of great importance. In this connection the solidarity of chemistry and the consistent efforts of chemists to ally their science with industry is contrasted with the very different state of affairs that exists in botany. Another new influence of unifying tendency is the National Research Council, which, rather defying tradition, has combined in one division all of biology and agriculture. Besides it is attempting to bring about greater cooperation of research institutions and to amplify scientific activities by securing support from commercial and other sources. There still exist men who earnestly decry the economic tendencies of science and consider such argument, either as justification or for support, to be futile or dangerous. Whatever appeal there may be to botany and correlative sciences in the phrase "research for research's sake," it is Quixotic to expect it to be effective in such fields of effort as medicine, engineering and agriculture, where the relations to health, industry and prosperity are obvious.

If there is to be adopted a broader view of plant science, one that is to embrace all of conventional botany as well as plant culture, it is manifestly important that there be full discussion of the desirability of such amalgamation as well as of the causes that have led to the existing state of affairs. There is apparently need of considerable readjustment of

¹ Address in the joint program of the American Society of Agronomy, Botanical Society of America and American Phytopathological Society, Chicago, December 30, 1920.