

SCIENCE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1921.

(a) ON SOME PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES: (b) THE WAR AGAINST THE INSECTS ¹

The American Association for the Advancement of Science:

(a) *On Some Presidential Addresses;* (b) *The War against Insects:* DR. L. O. HOWARD 641

Address at the Laying of the Corner Stone of the Chemical Laboratory of Cornell University: PROFESSOR EDW. L. NICHOLS..... 651

The Origin of Soil Colloids and the Reason for the Existence of this State of Matters: DR. MILTON WHITNEY..... 653

When will the Teaching of Chemistry become a Science? DR. NEIL E. GORDON..... 656

Scientific Events:

Earl Jerome Grimes; Electric Power Maps; Medals of the Royal Society..... 658

Scientific Notes and News..... 659

University and Educational News..... 661

Discussion and Correspondence:

The Acquisitive Instinct in Children as an Educational Stimulus: DR. WILLIAM DRUMM JOHNSTON, JR. *Linkage in Poultry:* DR. J. B. S. HALDANE. *The Zoological Record:* DR. W. L. SCLATER. *Meteorologische Zeitschrift:* DR. OTTO KLOTZ..... 662

Scientific Books:

Recent Advances in Paleopathology: DR. ROY L. MOODIE..... 664

Special Articles:

A Simple Method of obtaining Premature Eggs from Birds: DR. OSCAR RIDDLE. *The Discovery of Olenellus Fauna in Southeastern British Columbia:* STUART J. SCHOFIELD. *Howardula benigna: a Nema Parasite of the Cucumber-beetle:* DR. N. A. COBB..... 664

To prepare a presidential address to be delivered before either the British or the American Association for the Advancement of Science is a very serious matter, and many eminent men have found it so. Is it not a sad thought that each year for many years there has been a man here and one over there who has had to worry for months, first as to his subject and again as to its mode of presentation? Of course, it sometimes happens that a man like Mr. Balfour over there or Dr. Eliot on this side is made president, and of course such men can write profound and charming addresses almost in their sleep, they have become so accustomed to formal functions of great importance. But the average man of science, even of presidential caliber, is a specialist, absorbed in his work, and the sudden realization that he must prepare an address which should interest all scientific men and should help to interest others in science is appalling.

I imagine that few of you have ever thought of this psychological aspect of presidential addresses. Possibly many of you never took the trouble to read a presidential address. Presidential addresses are things one is rather inclined to take for granted, and when one turns the pages of the journal *Nature* or the journal *Science* one is apt to say to oneself "That looks good; some day I must read it"; and then, after a glance at the news notes, the journal goes on file. In other words, presidential addresses demand the serious attention of the men who prepare them and of very few besides. Yet, I have never heard a presidential address before either the British Association or

¹ Address of the President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Toronto, 1921.

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