

# SCIENCE

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## CONTENTS

<i>The American Association for the Advancement of Science:</i>	
<i>Diverse Doctrines of Evolution, their Relation to the Practice of Science and of Life:</i> PROFESSOR H. S. JENNINGS .....	19
<i>The Nation and Science:</i> THE HONORABLE HERBERT HOOVER .....	26
<i>Arnold Edward Ortmann:</i> DR. W. J. HOLLAND .....	29
<i>Scientific Events:</i>	
<i>The Pan-Pacific Science Congress; Program of the American Engineering Council; The American Museum of Natural History; Anti-evolution Legislation and the American Association of University Professors; Dinner in Honor of Sir J. J. Thomson</i> .....	30
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i> .....	32
<i>University and Educational Notes</i> .....	34
<i>Discussion:</i>	
<i>Early Days of Anti-vivisection:</i> DR. W. W. KEEN.	
<i>Helium in Deep Diving:</i> DR. ELIHU THOMSON.	
<i>About the Accusation of Plagiarism of the Late Director of the Pulkovo Observatory, Otto Struve:</i> A. A. IVANOFF. <i>The Dissolution of Insulin into Two New Active Substances:</i> DR. CASIMIR FUNK .....	35
<i>Quotations:</i>	
<i>"Narcosan" and Drug Addiction</i> .....	40
<i>Scientific Books:</i>	
<i>Freundlich on Colloid and Capillary Chemistry:</i> PROFESSOR HARRY N. HOLMES. <i>Zane Grey on Deep Sea Fishing in New Zealand:</i> DR. DAVID STARR JORDAN .....	40
<i>Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods:</i>	
<i>"A F S," a New Resin of High Refractive Index for mounting Microscopic Objects:</i> G. DALLAS HANNA. <i>The Culture Medium for Drosophila:</i> TAKU KOMAI .....	41
<i>Special Articles:</i>	
<i>On the Origin of Sun-spot Vortices:</i> PROFESSOR FERNANDO SANFORD. <i>Bacterial Filters and Filterable Viruses:</i> DR. S. P. KRAMER .....	43
<i>Science News</i> .....	x

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## DIVERSE DOCTRINES OF EVOLUTION, THEIR RELATION TO THE PRACTICE OF SCIENCE AND OF LIFE<sup>1</sup>

As a fresh unhackneyed subject for an after dinner address I propose to talk on evolution. Some doctrines of evolution are not so hackneyed as others. My own favorite doctrine has been only too much neglected. I now discover with pleased surprise that this very doctrine is coming into fashion. No longer can its exposition be described as a voice or two crying in the wilderness. Philosophical congresses discuss it, eminent zoologists discant upon it; still more significant, it has acquired a name that identifies it. Naturally, therefore, while it is in sight, I seize this opportunity to greet its emergence; to promote its publicity. Therefore, prepare for propaganda. See that your defense complexes are in working order. One needs nowadays to keep them ready for instant use; so you will not complain at my giving them a bit of drill.

The name that the doctrine has acquired is Emergent Evolution. This may be a poor name, but any name is better than being nameless; so one must be thankful. The different ways of conceiving the evolutionary process have diverse bearings upon one's attitude toward the world; upon the temperament and outlook of the student of science; upon the course that science takes. What I wish to do is, not to expound emergent evolution as a doctrine, but to inquire into its bearings on these matters, as compared with those of other ways of looking at evolution; to set forth my own notions of these bearings. You will see that to me this doctrine appears an edifying one. My thesis is that the conscious acceptance of the doctrine of emergent evolution and of its implications would greatly ameliorate biological science as practiced and as preached; would much moderate, mitigate and amend its influence on the human outlook and the practice of living. I speak therefore as a hopeful uplifter.

Evolution is often identified with perfect mechanism; or at least held to be consistent and coincident in its operation with mechanism. According to that doctrine in its perfection, the universe as a whole, or

<sup>1</sup> Address of the retiring chairman of the Zoological Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, December 28, 1926.

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