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INTERNATIONAL CHEMISTRY¹

SCIENTISTS have always been internationally minded. Roger Bacon spent many years in Paris. Copernicus, a native of Poland, lived in several Italian cities. Robert Boyle's winter in Florence appears to have given him his initial interest in science. In the last century, as the result of Liebig's initiative, students from all countries migrated to the chemical laboratories of Germany. In times of peace, at least, seekers for truth have paid little heed to political boundaries but have gone to sit at the feet of the masters, wherever they might happen to be. Moreover, in earlier times the savants of different countries were eager to meet and to hear from one another's lips the descriptions of new discoveries. The Royal Society of London, which was founded in 1660 at the suggestion of a German residing in that city, from the beginning adopted a policy of hospitality to all nations. One of its first fellows was a foreigner, another was the first secretary, and the foreign correspondence of the society led to its well-known journal, the *Philosophical Transactions*.

Time has brought changes. None but the students in backward nations need travel abroad to receive good scientific instruction. A multitude of books and periodicals bring us far more information than any one person has time to read. Strong national organizations have sprung up for science in general, for individual sciences, for specialties in each science. Of these, chemistry has its full share. To-day we are seeking in international intercourse not so much news and instruction, although that still has its place, as some effective means of coordination. It is as if we had built separately, with constant interchange of plans, important scattered units, which still need to be tied together into a common structure.

Briefly, what can international organizations hope to accomplish? It seems to me that their possibilities for good lie chiefly in two directions: first, carrying out projects which smaller organizations can not undertake successfully; and second, promoting a great number of personal contacts between individuals of different countries.

Permit me to sketch for you the main developments in international chemistry in the last forty years. In 1889 an International Congress of Chemistry was held at Paris in connection with the exposition of that

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