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ENGINEERING CULTURE¹

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AT the outset of this paper it seems necessary that we should define what we mean by culture. The conventional thing to do is to quote an authoritative dictionary, but here we are met with difficulty. The word "culture" has seven or eight different definitions, varying all the way from "the details of a map which do not represent natural features of the area delineated," to the definition "refinement in manners and tastes." By some of our artist friends culture is regarded as measured by the production of works of art, while our friends the philosophers would doubtless insist that culture includes the formation of a philosophy of life. For the purposes of this paper we may perhaps regard culture as "the training, disciplining or refining of the moral and intellectual nature."

I wish to point out that taken in the sense of refine-

¹ Address of the vice-president and chairman of Section M—Engineering, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Cleveland, December 30, 1930.

ment of manners and morals, or in the artist's sense of production of works of art, a cultured man may be very narrow-minded. In Conan Doyle's novel "Sir Nigel," the young squire visits an old authority on the culture of knighthood, and the old knight is anxious above all else that this young friend always use exactly the correct word, lest he be the cause of laughter to his hearers and of grief to his friends. Especially must he recognize the fact that each species of animal has a distinctive name to designate a group. One must *never* speak of a *herd* of lions, but rather of a *pride* of lions. To speak of a *flock* of pheasants is a grievous sin against culture—it is a *nye* of pheasants. Similarly, to-day, there are many guardians of culture who are more shocked at a misspelled word (even in our quite unsystematic English spelling) than at a hazily expressed thought. Many there are who boast of themselves as liberals who are as deeply distressed as the strictest Pharisee at any infraction of any detail of the current social or literary

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