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MEDALS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES¹

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ACADEMY

FROM time to time endowments have been deposited with the academy in trust for general purposes of the academy and council or for aiding research by grants or for bestowing medals, in some cases with honoraria, upon outstanding American or foreign scientists. There are twenty of these funds, of which eleven are for conferring honors. Each of the honor funds is in the hands of a special committee, which recommends to the academy the recipient it has chosen for any given year. Some of these awards are in recognition of research in special fields, as for instance the Watson Medal for the promotion of astronomical research or the Agassiz Medal for contributions to oceanography.

The history of science has demonstrated that, throughout all recorded time, certain men of the high-

est intelligence have been dominated by ideas and by ideals of human betterment with quite secondary reference to material rewards. This is written not only in the history of science, but also in other realms of the human understanding and endeavor. May we not, however, claim for science that for some hundreds of years its results have been progressively cumulative, that it has not had to relinquish any territory over which it has once established dominion and that each conquest is a base for new advances. These are the two chief claims of science to be heard in our time. That the methods and the spirit of science can be applied to all kinds of human needs is also one of the beliefs that urges us on to its farther advancement.

Because scientific men have labored so, usually without thought of material reward, for the joy of accomplishment and for the good of humanity, the

¹ Presented after the dinner of the academy at the annual autumn meeting held at the University of Chicago on November 16, 17 and 18.

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