

SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 1901.

THE PROGRESS OF SCIENCE.*

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A CONSTITUTIONAL provision of our Association stipulates that "it shall be the duty of the President to give an address at a General Session of the Association at the meeting following that over which he presided." Happily for those of us who must in turn fulfill this duty, the scientific foresight of our predecessors set no metes and bounds with respect to the subject-matter or the mode of treatment of the theme that might be chosen for such an address. So far, therefore, as constitutional requirements are concerned, a retiring president finds himself clothed for the time being with a degree of liberty which might be regarded as dangerous, were it not for an unwritten rule that one may not hope to enjoy such liberty more than once. But time and place, nevertheless, as well as the painful personal limitations of any specialist, impose some rather formidable restrictions. One may not tax lightly, even in a summer evening, the patience of his audience for more than an academic hour, the length of which in most cases is less than sixty minutes. One must confine himself to generalities, which, though scientifically hazardous, serve as a basis for semi-popular thought; and one must exclude technical

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* Address of the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, given at the Denver Meeting, August 27, 1901.

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