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THE AIMS OF AN ASTRONOMER.¹

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Two titles have suggested themselves for my address of this morning, 'The Aims of a Man of Science' and 'The Aims of an Astronomer.' The objections to the more restricted title are, that those of you who do not know me might think that I was about to discourse upon the inhabitants of Mars, or give you a technical paper interspersed with mathematical formulæ of appalling length. From both of these courses I solemnly promise to abstain. The broader title might lead me into domains outside of my own studies, which are always particularly tempting to a specialist. The early aims of an astronomer must be passed over briefly to reach the more alluring field when they become, or should become, the aims of astronomy.

The first aim of a boy when he reaches manhood, and becomes an independent unit in the community, is generally to acquire money or its equivalent. This aim for a time is perfectly legitimate. He is entitled to support, food, lodging and clothing. Unfortunately, the savage has here a great advantage over civilized man. As soon as he attains his full strength and physical development, he becomes an important member of his tribe. He can hunt and fish, and can live in even greater comfort than his elders. The complex wants of civilization have changed all this. With us, a boy must get his education, and for years must be dependent on others when he should

¹ Address before the Harvard Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa

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