

# SCIENCE

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## THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

### ADDRESS BEFORE THE SECTION OF MATHEMATICS AND PHYSICS.

My predecessors in this chair have in general been able to make communications to the section conveying the results of investigations of their own, or enunciating some principle which would throw a fresh light on the discoveries of others. Mine is a far less happy lot. During the past four years and a half I have been engaged in administrative duties of such a nature that no time has been available for personal scientific work, and little energy even for the study of the work of others. In these circumstances it might have seemed more fitting if I had refused the honor which the council of the British Association conferred upon me by the request that I would undertake the arduous duties which fall to the lot of the president of Section A. Nevertheless, after much hesitation, I decided to accept the invitation, in the hope that as a looker-on at the struggle of others, and with the experience of an old participator in the fray, I might be able to communicate some impressions which had possibly escaped the notice of those whose attention was necessarily more directed to some special branch of inquiry.

I trust that these words of apology may to some extent explain the nature of what must appear a fragmentary discourse.

In the interval which has elapsed since the last meeting of the association we have lost many men whose names were household

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