

SCIENCE

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CONTENTS:

The American Association for the Advancement of Science:—

Address of the Vice-President before Section C.—Chemistry—The Achievements of Physical Chemistry: W. A. NOYES.....461

Section C.—Chemistry: F. P. VENABLE, CHAS. H. HERTY470

Address of the Vice-President before Section H.—Anthropology—Emblematic Use of the Tree in the Dakotan Group: ALICE C. FLETCHER.....475

Current Notes on Anthropology:—

American Linguistics; Primitive Psychology: D. G. BRINTON.....488

Current Notes on Meteorology:—

A Tornado in Argentina; Atmospheric Dust Observations; Recent Kite-flying at Blue Hill Observatory: R. DEC. WARD.....488

Scientific Notes and News:—

A British National Physical Laboratory; Recent Geographical Exploration; The University Scientific Magazine: R. H. T. Inorganic Chemistry: J. L. H. General490

University and Educational News.....496

Discussion and Correspondence:—

Geology in the Colleges and Universities of the United States: FREDERIC W. SIMONDS. *On a Supposed Immediate Effect of Pollen*: HERBERT J. WEBBER. *The Definition of Civil Engineering*: F. O. MARVIN.....497

Scientific Literature:—

Sully's Studies of Childhood: JOHN DEWEY. *Tyler's Whence and Whither of Man*: E. G. CONKLIN.....500

Scientific Journals:—

The Astrophysical Journal; The Monist.....503

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY.*

'PHYSICAL chemistry is the chemistry of the future.' These words, quoted from an address by Prof. Du Bois-Reymond, were used by Ostwald ten years ago in the introduction to the first number of the *Zeitschrift für physikalische Chemie*. In using these words Du Bois-Reymond looked forward to a time when it shall be possible to give a mathematical expression to all forms of chemical knowledge. The picture in his mind seems to have been that of a sort of astronomy of the atoms, in which the motions and forces within the molecules shall be known very much as are the motions and forces within the planetary system.

So far as any practical realization is concerned, the thought is still only a poetic fancy, and whatever progress, if any, may have been made, comes to us from organic rather than from physical chemistry. Indeed, it seems to have become the fashion on the part of several leaders in physical chemistry to speak slightly of the atomic and molecular theories. Their thought appears to be that it would be better to confine ourselves to the purely empirical and mathematical concept of the atom and molecule and leave the idea of particles

* Address by the Vice-President before Section C—Chemistry.

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