

SCIENCE

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1914

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE GEOGRAPHICAL SECTION OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE¹

MAN AS A GEOGRAPHICAL AGENCY

IN an inaugural address to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society on Geography and Statecraft Lord Milner said: "If I have no right to call myself a geographer, I am at least a firm believer in the value of geographical studies." I wish to echo these words. I have no expert geographical knowledge, and am wholly unversed in science, but I am emboldened to try and say a few words because of my profound belief in the value of geographical studies. I believe in their value partly on general grounds, and largely because a study of the British empire leads an Englishman, whether born in England or in Australia, to the inevitable conclusion that statecraft in the past would have been better, if there had been more accurate knowledge of geography. This statement might be illustrated by various anecdotes, some true, not a few apocryphal; but anecdotes do not lend themselves to the advancement of science. I am encouraged, too, to speak because the field of geography is more open to the man in the street than are the sciences more strictly so-called. It is a *graphy*, not a *logy*. Geology is the science of the earth. Geography is a description of the face of the earth and of what is on or under it, a series of pictures with appropriate letterpress and with more or less appropriate morals to adorn the tale. The man in the street may talk affably and even intelligently about the face of the earth.

¹ Australia, 1914.

MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

Science

40 (1030)

Science **40** (1030), 425-456.

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Science (print ISSN 0036-8075; online ISSN 1095-9203) is published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1200 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005. The title *Science* is a registered trademark of AAAS.

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