

SCIENCE

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THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BIOLOGIST IN THE MATTER OF PRESERVING NATURAL CONDITIONS

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THE writer has accepted a joint chairmanship of the Committee on the Preservation of Natural Conditions of the Ecological Society of America. The special task undertaken by him is to interest some of our leading scientific organizations and institutions in a proposed affiliation for the purpose of making "a more serious effort to rescue a few fragments of vanishing nature."

I am only too painfully aware of the fact that this task might have been undertaken by others with much more promise of success. There are many in the ranks of American biologists whose scientific prestige and administrative ability would carry far greater weight than mine. There are many who could—if they would—undertake this plain duty without risk to their health and without serious curtailment of their output in the field of research. It is my hope that more of our leaders in science will be aroused to the necessity of becoming also leaders in the conservation movement. I for one will welcome the day when this leadership will pass into their hands. In the meantime, I shall be glad, if only in a slight degree, to play the rôle of an enzyme or catalyzer, which may provoke effective energy transformations in others.

That both our native fauna and flora and our natural scenery are disappearing at an appalling rate is obvious to all, except those whose interests and outlook are bounded by the walls of their laboratories. Despite the indignant denials of some, I am afraid that this last type of individual is not wholly mythical. But the great bulk of the apathy with which we have to contend is doubtless due to another cause. This is a spirit of

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