

SCIENCE

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<i>The American Association for the Advancement of Science:</i>	
<i>Some Present Aspects of Chemistry in the United States:</i> PROFESSOR B. F. LOVELACE.	139
<i>An Ancient Skeleton discovered in Ecuador:</i>	
DR. MARSHALL H. SAVILLE.....	147
<i>Scientific Events:</i>	
<i>The Mulford Biological Exploration of the Amazon Basin; Educational Forestry; Lectures at the University of Michigan; Booklets of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.....</i>	148
<i>Scientific Notes and News.....</i>	150
<i>University and Educational News.....</i>	152
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:</i>	
<i>Another high-temperature Record for Growth and Endurance:</i> DR. D. T. MACDOUGAL AND EARL B. WORKING. <i>A Calculator for converting Gas Chain Voltage into Equivalent C_{H+} or p_H Values:</i> DR. PAUL E. KLOPSTEG. <i>Mathematics in Spanish-speaking Countries:</i> PROFESSOR G. A. MILLER. <i>The Earliest Bees, Wasps and Ants:</i> PROFESSOR T. D. A. COCKERELL	152
<i>Special Articles:</i>	
<i>The Pneumatic Paradox in Acoustics:</i> PROFESSOR CARL BARUS.....	155
<i>The Kentucky Academy of Science:</i> ALFRED M. PETER	156

SOME PRESENT ASPECTS OF CHEMISTRY IN THE UNITED STATES¹

It has often been observed that those living in the midst of great events sometimes fail to understand the far-reaching effects of the occurrences going on around them. During revolutionary times attention is so riveted upon the single occurrences which follow each other with bewildering rapidity that the participants often fail to view the succession of events as a whole and thus miss their full significance. Revolution is scarcely too strong a word to apply to the changes relating to chemistry which are taking place in this country. The very great impetus which the science of chemistry has experienced during recent years brings with it a series of problems vitally related to the science as a whole, to our educational institutions and to industry.

It seems appropriate that on this occasion we might with profit, to borrow a business expression, take stock of the present situation. I shall therefore endeavor to give a brief and partial analysis of the outstanding features of the existing conditions, which are more or less confused, and lay down a few broad principles which appear to offer a sound basis of future development.

The events of the past five years have exerted a profound influence not only upon chemistry but upon various other sciences represented by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. To meet the critical situation presented in 1914 and the more critical condition in 1917, the country called to its service the entire scientific resources at its command and nearly every branch of science contributed something, either directly or indirectly, to aid in the solution of the pressing problems presented. The geologist was called

¹ Address of the vice-president and chairman of Section C, of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Chicago, December, 1920.

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