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INTERPRETATION OF SCIENCE¹

By Sir RICHARD GREGORY, Bart., F.R.S.

EDITOR OF *Nature*

THE address given by me last year, on "Science in the Public Press,"² was largely a plea for increased attention to scientific subjects in newspapers and other periodicals. It was suggested that there is a wide-spread interest in scientific discoveries and conceptions and that encouragement should be given to the production and distribution of articles in which such developments are made intelligible and acceptable to general readers. Appreciation of what is important in news of this kind requires a scientific training, while journalistic experience and a feeling for good literary style are desirable for popular treatment of the available matter. Considerations such as these are

¹ Address at the twelfth annual conference of the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux, London.

² Printed in the issue of SCIENCE for October 12, 1934.

concerned in the preparation of scientific articles which will appeal to thoughtful readers among the general public.

In addition to this "literature of knowledge," there is, following De Quincey's division, the "literature of power," by which he meant poems and other writings which survive because of their beauty of expression, as distinct from information which is continually being revised and expanded. By this standard, however brilliant the exposition of a scientific subject may be, it is not considered to be what is commonly known as literature unless it represents emotional response to what is perceived or experienced. It is true that a passage from one of Sir James Jeans's books appears in the thousand pages of literary extracts included in "The Oxford Book of English Prose," but this is the

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