

SCIENCE

VOL. 91

FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 1940

No. 2358

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SCIENCE: A Weekly Journal devoted to the Advancement of Science, edited by J. McKEEN CATTELL and published every Friday by

THE SCIENCE PRESS

New York City: Grand Central Terminal

Lancaster, Pa.

Garrison, N. Y.

Annual Subscription, \$6.00

Single Copies, 15 Cts.

SCIENCE is the official organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Information regarding membership in the Association may be secured from the office of the permanent secretary in the Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington, D. C.

NEW METHODS IN SPECTROSCOPY¹

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IN expressing my appreciation of, and gratitude for, the high honor which is bestowed in the award of the Rumford Medals, I am mindful of the obligation which is laid upon a medallist to hold in mind the true significance of such an award. In all human affairs there are values which are of so intangible a nature as to require frequent concrete symbolization if we are to keep their import before us; this is an occasion of such symbolization. I accept these medals, not as a reward for accomplishment, but as symbolic of a vast array of aspirations which we are gathered here to celebrate: the determination of our society that the search for truth shall be prosecuted diligently; the desire that men shall be encouraged in that prosecution; the hope that opportunity for such search may

¹ Address on the occasion of the Award of the Rumford Medals, of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston, October 11, 1939.

continue in constantly increasing measure; the conviction that every addition to our knowledge of the world in which we live, no matter how slight, brings one step closer the day when men shall be freed from the terrors which have beset them all through the ages—terrors which, though at times they may seem overwhelming, do in fact gradually become less.

Not the least of our duties of realization this evening is the appreciation of the progress which has taken place since 1839 in one of those branches of physical science which Count Rumford desired to further when he arranged for the provision of medals in recognition of researches on heat and light. Later it will be my pleasant duty to recount some of the recent developments in the study of light with which I have had the good fortune to be associated, but before I come to the specific portion of my address which deals with

Science

91 (2358)

Science 91 (2358), 225-248.

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