

ADDRESSES

THE ADVANTAGES OF A STATE ACADEMY OF SCIENCE.

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The opening address, by Professor Chamberlin, on *The Advantages of a State Academy of Science*, was given in the extemporaneous form, and the following outline very imperfectly represents what was said.

Professor Chamberlin introduced his address by conveying the felicitations of the Chicago Academy of Sciences, and sketched some of the salient features of its history of a little more than fifty years as a means of giving concrete illustration to some of the problems which the new academy must face. Special attention was directed to the radical change in the nature and relations of scientific activity since the oldest academies of the interior were established. In the pioneer days, an almost virgin field was open to naturalists, and enthusiasts in this field constituted the largest factor in the membership of its academies of science during their early stages of development. The results of these pioneer workers were much more fully within the appreciation of all their colleagues and of the intelligent public than are the products of the more highly specialized investigations of today. So widely has research deployed in the last fifty years, and so far has it reached into the

more recondite phases of each field, that there is now far less community of interest and of intelligent appreciation, even among scientific workers themselves. This fundamental change brings new problems of organization and of adjustment. In like manner, the function of an academy as an avenue of publication has assumed a new aspect. Fifty years ago, an appropriate means of publication was one of the greatest needs which the academies supplied to the pioneer workers, for, aside from these academies, the available opportunities of giving publicity and permanence to scientific results were few and unsatisfactory. As the regional element was dominant in the results of the early naturalists, it was fitting that there should be a local means of publication. Today, however, the results of research are, in general, more serviceable to scientific workers if they are gathered into the special journals devoted to the several departments of science. While the function of publishing the results of regional investigations still remains, and may well continue to be subserved by the regional academies of science, and while certain adaptations of other results may serve an important regional purpose, the question whether an academy should endeavor to be the avenue of miscellaneous publication to the same extent as in the early days is one of the problems that invite the serious consideration of a new academy.

Attention was also directed to the problems presented by the geographic distribution of the centers of scientific activity within the State and by the not altogether felicitous relations of these centers to the capital of Illinois.

The advantages of a state academy to those who are just entering upon scientific careers, to amateurs dissociated from institutions of research, to trained workers in relative isolation, and to workers in scientific centers, were specifically set forth. The values to be derived from opportunities of reading papers

before fellow workers, of submitting results to discussion, of participating in the discussion of others' results, of extending scientific acquaintance, of co-operation, of mutual stimulus to endeavor, of personal education by contact with other workers, were dwelt upon in detail. The value of the academy as a means of disseminating the spirit, the method, and the love of science among the people of the State was especially emphasized. The function of advising relative to legislation on scientific matters was urged as highly important.

The address closed with an earnest advocacy of the value of the spirit and method of science to the state and nation as an essential element in the solution of its great social, political, and ethical problems. The habit of conscientious search for the precise truth and the systematic control and guidance of opinion and action in accordance with the canons of scientific procedure were urged as means of supreme value in the elevation and purification of the common thought and feeling of our people. More than anything else, are the intellectual and moral methods of science a protection against current evils and a guarantee of safety in the future.