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OUR JOURNAL, PHYTOPATHOLOGY

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The story of our journal is simple, and it must prove prosy to listen to what you already well know. The chief things, indeed, are those written in the pages of *Phytopathology*: the character of contributions, financial limitations, editorial personnel and policies. It is suggested, however, that certain parts of the "unwritten history" should on this tenth anniversary be recorded, that those who, hereafter, note our "sins of omission" may be the more lenient in judgment and those who later direct our journal's development may do so with understanding of the early ideals.

THE SOCIETY ORGANIZED AROUND THE JOURNAL

He who has been our one Secretary can best explain how spontaneous was the Society's origin. Its elements were already present, as it were in over-saturation, for instant crystallization into stable and permanent form the moment the focal point was defined. And it should never be lost from our traditions that the Society was organized around and for the journal. This needs to be here written and witnessed that confusion may not later follow from the incident that it took us a year to produce the first number. The necessity of the separate organization for the maintenance of our journal brought the negative decision when we were later asked to merge the *Phytopathological Society* completely with the new *Botanical Society of America*. And I think that all of those who have held the faith from the beginning, are satisfied that the value of our journal to us individually and collectively has justified these decisions and efforts.

¹ Read at the Tenth Anniversary Dinner of the American *Phytopathological Society*, Baltimore, Md., December 25, 1918.

THE NEED OF OUR JOURNAL AS SUPPLEMENTING OTHER PUBLICATIONS

The gain through the appearance of *Phytopathology* has been two fold—the objective and the subjective. The first, because many worthwhile things have come to handy print which had otherwise been scattered or lost. The second, because seeing these has stimulated others to put more on record.

Reddick (*Phytopathology*, 8:182) has wisely warned against one of the most insidious temptations that deceives the investigator—to let his zeal in research excuse his delay in publication. Too often have we seen this pass from the stage of the natural and worthy modesty of the youth, unable quite to make his maiden manuscript meet his ideals, to that of the hopeless scientific recluse, as unfitted to bring himself to the exchange of results through the channel of publication as the miser is to barter his gold. The miser's coin were better unminted since all it represents is selfishly perverted human effort. How much more commendable or less selfish is the hoarding of ideas? And with our ideas as with our gold, gain normally follows legitimate exchange.

But even with such faith as was held in the mission of our journal I am glad that those who started it—with fear and trembling, be it said—could not foresee the early inaugural of the splendid *Journal of Agricultural Research* and of that younger but somewhat more stately sister, the *American Journal of Botany*. Had either (not to say both) of these publications been prophesied I fear that even the optimist would have feared the extinction of *Phytopathology* early in its struggles, and with a plaint like the waif of the classic doggerel:

"It is so soon that I am done for
I wonder what I was begun for?"

As a matter of fact, however, it was from the outset realized that the chief need in our American professional circle was not for a heavy research journal. In this respect our conditions differed from those which later gave rise to the *American Journal of Botany*. Few, if any, lengthy American manuscripts representing properly matured research in *Phytopathology* had, to my knowledge, lacked adequate opportunity for publication even before the appearance of our journal. Nor have its pages been regularly or consistently occupied with matter of this sort. No one who has caught the spirit of American botanical literature would think of turning to *Phytopathology* for such articles as Smith's final publications on crown gall, Shear's on *Glomerella*, or Freeman and Stakman's on disease resistance in wheat.

Does this mean that our journal has failed to realize its true mission? Does it follow that the Society which it represents is content with lower

standards or has less able membership than sister societies whose journals seek exclusively the heavier research articles?

AIMS AND CONTENTS CHARACTERIZED

Let us again make record of ideals which have dominated our journal's management from the outset, so that if any in the future would make apology or criticism it may be for judgment or method and not for aim or purpose. So far as I know, no one has ever thought of the chief mission of *Phytopathology* as any other than to stimulate and advance the research spirit in our profession. From the outset its writings on practically every page have been addressed to American phytopathologists as investigators. Many of us have had other phytopathological interests, e.g., class room teaching, extension, field demonstration, and some of the most significant developments of the last decade in American work have been along these lines. Nevertheless, there is little reflection of such activities other than research in our journal. Even so significant a movement as the plant disease survey has occupied scant space. On the other hand, were one to take these pages as his chief index to the strength or depth of American phytopathological research during the last decade, he would find inadequate definition of our best standards and must underestimate our progress.

Not even in our review columns have we a uniformly discriminating portrayal of what is best in the American output of these years. For this condition regarding reviews I have personally felt regret. Not that we have so much needed it ourselves, but that our foreign readers naturally and rightly must have expected it. This is, however, in keeping with the other evidences that our journal has been the simple wholesome expression of our genuine needs with constant regard to the limitation of our resources. While the aim of *Phytopathology* has been consistently the promotion of research, these evident financial limitations have so guided the editorial policies as deliberately and avowedly to divert the longer articles and those requiring much or costly illustration, so far as practicable, to state and national publications. This has kept our limited space available for reasonably prompt publication of the briefer research articles—often preliminary summaries, reports of progress, or timely notes—of which the completed account might be expected later in government publications. At the same time our columns have offered ready opportunity for any of the heavier contributions where the author's official connections did not secure for him the adequate outlet, e.g., Henderson's article on *Phoma* in the recent August issue.

Regarding *Phytopathology* as supplementary to government publications, I add for record that probably all who have long been in state or

national service realize the importance of maintaining a non-official organ as a "safety valve" that cannot be bound down by red tape. I think it may safely be said that since the foundation of our journal no member of our Society has been without opportunity for prompt publication of any phytopathological manuscript of merit, of whatever length or character. Quite apart from those, sometimes irksome but apparently unavoidable, limitations inherent in government publications, I think the men from the states at least will agree that our institutional bulletins and reports are annually becoming less satisfactory as the sole repositories of research matter. The overwhelming stream of extension publications hopelessly engulfs and sweeps from attention the occasional research bulletin. Do we not owe it, therefore, to our subject, to our American colleagues, and especially to foreign phytopathologists, regularly to publish in *Phytopathology* at least some abstract of any such matter as a guide to the completer article? Indeed much of the interesting matter in *Phytopathology* from the outset has consisted of just such things, in the form of either preliminary publications or summaries, of which the fuller or final publication has appeared elsewhere. In addition there are the various minor research articles and phytopathological notes of much timely interest and permanent value, but of such fragmentary or disconnected nature that they would not find place in the official channels and, were it not for this ever ready repository, would remain indefinitely lodged in our notebooks or filing cases.

As supplementing the original matter all have, I think, from the outset welcomed the things of other kind with which each number closes, whether personal notes, literature lists or reviews. For my own part the personal news notes are each year becoming more welcome. Through these we are being introduced to our younger recruits and may follow their earlier migrations—and here we often first learn of the losses to our ranks which with passing years must become more numerous and more personal.

As for the reviews, I have already voiced my lack of full satisfaction with them. Since my own editorial efforts in this field were of no more avail than my successor's, I may express my judgment without hesitation. Our reviews have never been a credit to the journal and have indeed been misleading rather than helpful, in my opinion. They have doubly failed in that they have neither consistently included what was best nor condemned what deserved criticism in our literature. With the appearance of *Botanical Abstracts* may we not wisely omit further reviews, as such. In the exceptional case discussion of anything uniquely deserving attention (whether at home or abroad) may appear in the form of a phytopathological note.

On the other hand, Miss Oberly's literature lists have been most ably and helpfully compiled. I wish to take this occasion to express my personal appreciation of her assistance in this and I am sure the editors and Society will wish to join in thanking her for the service so efficiently rendered. I presume that with the appearance of Botanical Abstracts the question will also arise as to the continuation of this list. Personally, I favor its retention and in exactly its present form. It is, and must continue, more uniformly up to date and more inclusive than the Abstracts and is so concise and accurate that it would be a serious mistake to permit its interruption. We should recognize the human limitations, of even so able an abstract editor as we now have, and also that individual endurance will probably not be such as to give us the same abstractors indefinitely. There can be no such assurance, therefore, of uniformity, and continuity in abstracts as in our more mechanical type of literature list. Again, therefore, I urge its uninterrupted appearance.

THE SOCIETY'S JOURNAL

Phytopathology began as the Society's journal, every issue has so been and thus may it ever continue. It is the expression and embodiment of the three prime characteristics of our Society; youthful vigor, zeal for service, and American democracy.

Regarding the first let us add that we should not, must not, lose our youth. For this reason we must continue initiating the young pathologists early into our circle and by giving them their proper recognition and responsibility insure perpetual renewal of our Society's vigor. And the second point is a corollary of the first. For if the journal of the Society is to be primarily of service to the Society it must help chiefly our younger members. Let its columns continue in the future as in the past to be freely open to their "maiden manuscripts." Not, let me warn, regardless of standards; to do this would be to work harm rather than good. Here must continue to rest a serious editorial responsibility. May I emphasize this point that its significance be not overlooked. I have some times heard expression of regret—and may have momentarily joined in it myself—that Phytopathology was not more largely or exclusively the channel of publication of our maturer members. But let us recall the points made earlier. Were it so what would we gain, since for most of these the regular professional channels are open? The encouragement of our young men must continue as one of our peculiar opportunities and large responsibilities.

Our Society and its journal were founded and have continued in a spirit of democratic inclusiveness. I wish in closing to emphasize this

third point that we may continue ever to preserve this traditional relation as happily as heretofore. An insidious danger in such an organization of busy and widely scattered men is that the majority of us neglect our part and force the responsibility of management permanently upon the few. While we must, of course, delegate the editorial tasks, term by term, to selected men, we as electors should never forget, and they as editors should never let us forget, that Phytopathology remains the Society's journal.

It was to safeguard this principle that we decided early upon two customs which experience thus far has proven so sound that I trust they may prevail indefinitely. The first is rotation on the editorial committee, limiting incumbency, even with the chief editor, to three successive years. The second is some geographical oscillation. While it is probably true that, in general, the chief editor should be an eastern man, we should at least aim at alternation as between a representative from the Department of Agriculture and from the State institutions. If this is not done with mechanical precision it should at least occur regularly enough to guard against the natural but, I believe, seriously objectionable tendency for gravitation more and more toward the central body. Do not mistake the idea,—it is not that there would be any conscious effort to draw it there, but rather that it will require the persistently conscious effort to ward it off. It is so logical, and for us men in the State institutions so easy, that we will forever be tempted thus to unload the burden. Let us beware of the danger from, in this or any other way, narrowing or limiting the circle of responsible management. May our journal ever remain broadly representative of that spirit which is pledged through democratic methods and organization to stimulate in the fullest degree service through research in phytopathology.

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