

THE BUFFALO COLLOQUIUM.*

On April 16, 1896, with the approval of the Council, the following circular was issued to the members of the American Mathematical Society :

To the Members of the American Mathematical Society :

At the instance of certain members of the Society, the Council has given its approval to a proposal for a meeting auxiliary to the Summer meeting, to continue for one week subsequent to the regular session, and to be designated as a Colloquium or Conference. The proposal and the reasons for it are briefly the following :

GROUNDS FOR THE PROPOSAL. The objects now attained by the Summer meeting are twofold : an opportunity is offered for presenting before discriminating and interested auditors the results of research in special fields, and personal acquaintance and mutual helpfulness are promoted among the members in attendance. These two are the prime objects of such a gathering. It is believed, however, that a third no less desirable result lies within reach. From the concise, unrelated papers presented at any meeting, only few derive substantial benefit. The mind of the hearer is too unprepared, the impression is of too short duration to produce accurate knowledge of either the content or the method. The half-hour paper, the twenty-minute paper, or the paper read by title, are forgotten almost before they are finished. The one-hour lectures are more effective, but they too are weakened by the fact of complete novelty. Positive and exact knowledge, scientific knowledge, is rarely increased in these short and stimulating sessions.

On the other hand, the courses of lectures in our best universities, even with topics changing at intervals of a few weeks, do give exact knowledge and furnish a substantial basis for reading and investigation. Lectures followed by reading yield much larger returns for the time expended than unaided reading.

THE PLAN FOR A COLLOQUIUM. To extend the time of a lecture to two hours, and to multiply this time by three or by six, would be practicable within the limits of one week. An expert lecturer could present, in six two-hour lectures, a moderately extensive chapter in some one branch of Mathematics. With some new matter, much that is old could be mingled, and digests of recent or too much neglected publi-

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