

A D D R E S S

OF

PROFESSOR BENJAMIN PEIRCE,

PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE YEAR 1853,

ON RETIRING FROM THE DUTIES OF PRESIDENT. .

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE : —

In most offices, the duties terminate with the office, and the thing of the past, the ex-officer, is to the present an unknown quantity. But it is not so with your President. Science, with its time-annihilating power, which gives life to the fossil, which hurries the embryo future into premature birth, which ventures beyond the grave even to the foot of the invisible throne, sternly drags forward its reluctant presidents to their hardest trial when they have ceased to be, to a judgment after death severer than that of Rhadamanthus. This calling out of the actor upon the stage after the night of performance, when the blood is no longer warm, is all the worse to him who has never before made a set speech, all whose habits of thought are unknown to æsthetic display, and the Arctic latitudes of whose frigid studies are impenetrable to the God of eloquence and to the Muses who vibrate the silver-toned chords of human sympathy.

Geometry, to which I have devoted my life, is honored with the title of the Key of the Sciences ; but it is the key of