

their existence possible. Indeed the situation would be like that produced by the decline of the Roman Empire and its invasion by the barbarians. Our very existence might be forgotten, as has happened before in the world's history, and our successors, ten thousand years from now, might come upon our buried cities and marvel when they attempted, from these relics of the past, to reconstruct our vanished civilization.

Such, then, is the vital role played by science in this modern world, yet this abstraction "Science" is but the bringing together, for the common good, of particular pieces and systems of knowledge held in the minds of individuals. The partial and incomplete scientific knowledge which the most gifted individual can possess in this short life of ours, is supplemented and completed by the knowledge of his fellows, and the result applied to serving the common need. Particularly and above all is this process carried out through the association of scientists together in such societies as those to which our minds are, at this moment, directed, which, to go no further back than the two centuries and a half since the foundation of the Royal Society in England, have done so much in enabling intellectual men to put their thoughts before their fellows, to clarify their ideas by discussion, to obtain the support of their friends in their settled and assured conclusions, and finally to carry on into the field of action and realize in tangible and material form the