INAUGURAL ADDRESS AND OBITUARY NOTICE OF THE LATE R. F. KEDZIE, BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

BY W. J. BEAL.

Members and Friends of the Society for the Promotion of Agricultural Science:—

Again another year has rolled around, and we meet for the third time to renew acquaintances, form new ones, and engage in discussing subjects pertaining to science in agriculture.

At each previous meeting you chose me as your presiding officer, an honor which I shall always remember with the highest gratification and pride. From the start I have had a deep interest in the welfare of the society. I am full of hope and zeal for its future growth and usefulness. However much I may be gratified with the high honor conferred on me, I cannot help expressing my honest opinion that no one person should long act as President of such a society as this.

I believe it will promote interest, strength and harmony to pass the highest honors from one to another. I hope you will agree with me, and I shall be much surprised if you do not select some other member for your next President.

To those who do not belong to the society, I may say that our number is quite small and limited, persons only becoming members by invitation.

At present we number thirty-four, and these are widely scattered in States bordering on the Atlantic, the Pacific, the great Gulf of the South, the great lakes of the North, and in intervening States.

A larger number of members are present than at any former meeting. On our program for this meeting appear the names of two-thirds of our members, and some of these appear more than once. This is some indication of the interest felt in the society.

From all indications this interest in our society is steadily on the increase. Without exception it has the cordial support of all its members and a host of others who are looking for the advancement of agriculture.

The objects of the society are quite distinct from those of any society which has ever existed in this country.

The objects were stated briefly in my opening address at the last annual meeting.

It is not the aim of this society to parade long lists of members or committees or to present popular addresses to please a large crowd, but to work in a quiet way for the promotion of science in its relations to agriculture.

We are unanimous in the belief that we have adopted the best plan for carrying out our objects.

While we rejoice in the prosperity of our Society, and her bright prospects, we have to mourn the untimely loss of one of our youngest members.

Professor ROBERT FAIRCHILD KEDZIE died at the Agricultural College in Mississippi, on February 13th, 1885, of typho-malarial fever. He was the second son of Dr. R. C. and Mrs. H. E. Kedzie, of the Michigan Agricultural College, and was not thirty years of age. He graduated at the college just named with a rank among the highest in 1871, although he was one of the youngest members of his class. He evinced great interest in pomology, but his especial delight was the study of chemistry, in which he showed great proficiency.

For about seven years he acted as the assistant of his father in the chemical laboratory of the Michigan Agricultural College. In place of his brother he acted for one year as professor of chemistry in Kansas Agricultural college, and at another time for a few months in Oberlin College.

Several of his vacations were passed in the chemical laboratory of Prof. S. W. Johnson, of Yale College, and Prof. F. H. Storer, of the Bussy Institute of Harvard University, where he distinguished himself for his industry and scholarly attainments.

General S. D. Lee, President of the Mississippi Agricultural College, considered himself very fortunate in securing R. F. Kedzie as his professor of chemistry. He afterward frequently expressed himself as greatly pleased with the success and solid achievements of Prof. Kedzie. Last August, at our meeting in Cincinnati, he was unanimously elected a member of this Society. This was certainly a very high honor, especially for one so young. He was looking forward with bright anticipations, intending to be present and take an active part in this meeting.

Last December Professor Kedzie was married to Miss Nellie Sawyer, of Ottawa, Kansas. It was my privilege to be intimately acquainted with Professor Kedzie, both as a student and associate teacher. His faithfulness as pupil and teacher was never excelled by any of my acquaintances. He was thorough and conscientious in whatever he undertook. He was earnest, enthusiastic, and successful, and a fine example of a Christian gentleman.

In conclusion, may our deliberations at this and all future meetings be as harmonious as they have been in the past. Like a fraternity of workers in a good cause may we be learners as well as teachers.

What a broad field of research is open before us! What grand results nature will yield to our patient, honest researches none can tell. Some, most certainly. May this Society long exist and prosper and accomplish much for the promotion of science in its relations to agriculture.

THE SOURCE OF NITROGEN FOR PLANTS.

BY R. C. KEDZIE.

The source of the nitrogen of plants has been to the agricultural chemist what the north-west passage through the polar sea has been to navigators. The difficulties in the solution of each of these problems have been correspondingly great, and the fascination of defeat which still beckons for new endeavor has tantalized both classes of explorers The north-west passage is not thrown open to the world's commerce, and the sphinx nitrogen still propounds her unsolved riddle by the wayside of the world's most useful calling. For a novice like myself to enter a field which has been explored by Priestly, Ingenhauz, De Saussure, Boussingault, Ville, Lawes, Gilbert and Pugh, suggests Pope's stinging line:

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

Yet we should remember that most of the reliable discoveries in science have come from the united contributions of many minds, and suggestions from unexpected sources have sometimes proved of great importance. We must remember that truth is discovered, not invented. A person of ordinary capacity may yet find a most precious gem or a golden nugget of priceless value.

Dr. Priestly was the first person to experiment upon the influence of a plant during growth upon the surrounding air, and he came to the conclusion that the plant took up a small amount of nitrogen from the air. Ingenhauz agreed with Priestly that plants during active growth took up a certain amount of atmospheric nitrogen and combined it into plant tissue. Seunebier and Woodhouse, through their experiments, arrived at the con-