

'Science' (pub. 07.03.13-20:08). Quote in M. Bergman & S. Paavola (Eds.), *The Commens Dictionary: Peirce's Terms in His Own Words. New Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-minute-logic-classification-sciences-second-paper-practical-sciences>.

Term: Science

Quote: The prevalent definition of a science, the definition of Coleridge, which influenced all Europe through the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, that science is systematized knowledge, is an improvement upon a statement of Kant (*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*: 1786): "Eine jede Lehre, wenn sie ein System, dass ist, ein nach Principien geordnetes Ganzes der Erkenntniss sein soll, heisst Wissenschaft." Yet it is to be noted that knowledge may be systematic or "organized," without being organized by means of general principles. Kant's definition, however, is only a modification of the ancient view that science is the knowledge of a thing through its causes, - the comprehension of it, as we might say, - as being the only perfect knowledge of it. In short, the Coleridgian definition is nothing but the last development of that sort of philosophy that strives to draw knowledge out of the depths of the *Ich-heit*. If, on the other hand, one opens the works of Francis Bacon, one remarks that, with all the astounding *greenness* and inexperience of his views of science, in some respects he is really a scientific man himself. He met his death as the consequence of an experiment. True, it was rather a foolish one; but what a monument to the genuineness of his intelligence, that he, a great legal light, should, at the age of sixty-six, have perished from his zeal in performing disagreeable and dangerous laboratory work that he thought might go toward teaching him something of the nature of true science! For him man is nature's interpreter; and in spite of the crudity of some anticipations, the idea of science is, in his mind, inseparably bound up with that of a life devoted to singleminded inquiry. That is also the way in which every scientific man thinks of science. That is the sense in which the word is to be understood in this chapter. Science is to mean for us a mode of life whose single animating purpose is to find out the real truth, which pursues this purpose by a well-considered method, founded on thorough acquaintance with such scientific results already ascertained by others as may be available, and which seeks coöperation in the hope that the truth may be found, if not by any of the actual inquirers, yet ultimately by those who come after them and who shall make use of their results. It makes no difference how imperfect a man's knowledge may be, how mixed with error and prejudice; from the moment that he engages in an inquiry in the spirit described, that which occupies him is science, as the word will here be used.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1902). *Minute Logic: Of the Classification of the Sciences. Second Paper. Of the Practical Sciences.* MS [R] 1343.

References: CP 7.54

Date of 1902

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