

SCIENCE

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AMERICAN BOTANY AND THE GREAT WAR

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THAT botany, the traditional *scientia amabilis*, should have a place in the present world war seems almost a contradiction in terms. Yet so far are we from the days when war was the concern of professional soldiers only, that one of the earliest announced requests of the British war commission was for regiments of foresters, who are first of all botanists, for service in the forests of France.

That the activities of all professional botanists should, moreover, be profoundly influenced by the war was inevitable. Botany like other sciences is international. Before the war Germany held a prominent and unique place in the botanical world. A number of American students of botany were trained in her laboratories, and although within the last decade the emigration of American students to Germany had slackened, it was the war which effectually stopped the current.

Germany held moreover an almost complete monopoly of the publication of abstracts of botanical papers. Botanists had come to take it as a matter of course that botanical abstracts would appear in German publications, and two at least of these abstract journals had attained world-wide circulation and prestige. These abstract journals are, of course, no longer available in America, if indeed they are being published. It is natural that in this particular field, now left vacant, American botanists should begin to extend their activities and it is gratifying to note that, at their last annual meeting (January, 1918), the members of the various American botanical societies inaugurated the publication of such a journal under editorship which guarantees its success.

In incidental, and somewhat unexpected, ways the war has influenced botanical studies. The shortage of potash has stimulated the

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