

SCIENCE

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THE STIMULATION OF RESEARCH AFTER THE WAR¹

AT the time when I received from Dr. Cook the notice of my assignment to this topic, the phrase "after the war" seemed to be of rather indefinite and at least possibly remote significance. There was a chance at least that anything I might say would have time to be forgotten before its timeliness would be put to the test.

To-day we are face to face with the problem of stimulating research in this new epoch, which the political and social cataclysms of the past four years have ushered in. I am not one of those who are inclined to minimize the significance of the period through which we have just passed in its relations especially to the advance of knowledge. It is a reproach to biological science that we are not able to predict evolutionary trends, but it is perhaps on the whole a hopeful sign that we frequently differ so widely in our judgment of the significance of current events, and of the world problems which the great conflict involved.

It is for us, who conceive biology as in any true sense the science of life processes and activities in plants and animals alike from the lowest to the highest, to look to our fundamental conceptions and take thought of the responsibilities which our scientific pretensions involve. In my opinion we may find in the final assessment of responsibilities for the world war that a pseudo-scientific dogmatism, and the promulgation in popular form of superficial and wholly misleading views of such evolutionary concepts as the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, have had a share, both in the production of the false national and racial ambitions which lead up

¹ Read before Section G, American Association for the Advancement of Science, at the Baltimore meeting in the symposium on "Research after the War."