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THE OUTLOOK IN THE SCIENCE OF NUTRITION¹

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THERE can be little doubt, I think, that the world war exerted a profound influence upon the status of science. The stress of that period developed among all the civilized nations a realization of the enormous part that the contributions of science really played in the pressing affairs of the day. Only a few years earlier one might have been content to say, with Michael Pupin: "Science in its abstract side is poetry; it is Divine Philosophy, as Milton calls it." "Science," he added, "is the food which feeds not only the material but also the spiritual body of man." Then, quite suddenly, in times of national need, there was awakened a conviction that everything is possible to science; and it was promptly called upon to solve some of the most perplexing practical problems that had ever confronted the world.

In 1919 the late Professor W. D. Halliburton stressed the usefulness of physiologists during the war.

¹ A paper presented at the meeting of the Federation of Biological Societies, Cincinnati, April, 1933.

It has been a war [he wrote] in which science has played a leading rôle. It has been so for mechanicians of every sort, on the land, on the sea and in the air. It has been so for the chemists who devised new explosives and new methods of attack, for instance, the poison gases. Many other examples of the chemical side of warfare might be adduced, but let us see what physiologists and physiological chemists have done. They stepped in not to add to the horrors of the battlefield, but to alleviate distress, and the very agent, chlorine, used for destructive purposes became in their hands the basis of the new antiseptics which have done so much to cure the wounds of war.²

The science of nutrition, in particular, was subjected to the influences of that turbulent period. The familiar wartime slogan, "Food will win the war," became the expression of research aspirations as well as practical endeavors. Permit me to quote some of the vigorous propaganda of the day.

² W. D. Halliburton, "Physiology and National Needs." E. P. Dutton and Company, New York, 1919.

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