AMERICAN LEARNING WHEN PEACE COMES.
"THE NATURAL SCIENCES"1

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In a consideration of the topic of American scientific learning in the post-war world, it must be understood that perhaps no other fields of human endeavor are as international in scope and attitude as are the natural sciences—astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, geology, mathematics and physics. A great deal that can be said concerning these subjects goes far beyond the limits of national boundaries and is of importance to all human beings. However, it appears definitely worth while to consider specifically the problems of American scientific learning when peace comes so that the contributions to the natural sciences which must be made and, it may be predicted, will be made, by American scholars and workers, can be seen at least in outline and can serve as a goal to be attained. The problem of American scientific learning will be discussed on the basis of three factors: the world background as seen by scientific men, the basic qualities of the human intellect, curiosity and imagination, upon which depends all progress in the natural sciences, and the special tasks which American scientists must face in so far as these problems concern the position and growth of American scientific learning in the period following the present conflict.

In an endeavor to consider these questions one might well insist that the only problem of importance at the moment must be the winning of this global war, since failure in this task would make irrelevant any further discussion concerning the position of American scientific learning when peace comes once again. But such a negative attitude would certainly lead to no improvement in the lot of humankind and a more sensible, in fact, a desperately necessary view is to

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Editor's Summary

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