

SCIENCE

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THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCIENTIST¹

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LITTLE more than two years ago, the American man of science was in his laboratory, busy with the problems of research. The possibilities of progress were never greater, and the obligation to exceptional effort, for the purpose of assisting to retrieve some of the heavy losses suffered by science through the war, was constantly before him. But the perennial attractions of research and the strongest desire to advance science were insufficient to hold his attention. He watched with indignation the piratical attacks of the submarine, the brutal invasion of provinces and states, the unspeakable horrors of the German advance. Undeceived by specious pleas for peace, he recognized the clear duty of the United States, and chafed at repeated delays when quick and determined action would have saved countless lives. And when, at last, we entered the war, he eagerly grasped any opportunity for service that came to him. Sometimes the opportunity did not come, and he then accepted the more difficult, but no less obvious, duty to persevere in his researches and thus to preserve the continuity of scientific progress.

The experience during the war of the man of science has sometimes been confusing, and it is possible that his responsibilities on the return of peace will not always be clearly recognized. Men who have previously devoted their lives to the advancement of knowledge have suddenly been called upon to solve practical problems, of the greatest military or industrial importance. In attacking these new questions, they have shown remarkable powers of adaptation, and surprise has often been

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