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ANIMAL PARASITES OF MAN AND THEIR CONTROL¹

By Dr. ALFRED C. REED

PROFESSOR OF TROPICAL MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

SOME years ago a party of travelers lost its way on a by-road down South, coming finally to a cross-roads store. Against one corner leaned a lethargic, malaria-ridden cracker, meditating over the chewing of a straw. The driver of the automobile hailed him, "Is that the highway yonder?" "I don't know." "Where does the road go at the fork ahead?" "I don't know." "You don't know much, do you?" "No, I don't know much, but I'm not lost." That is our position to-day with reference to the animal parasites of man. Their tremendous number and fecundity, the mystery of their origin, our lack of specific or any treatment in many cases, our defective knowledge of

their natural history, our ineffective methods of control, our feeble prognosis of their future relations to man—these things make us humble in the face of this great broadcast system of parasitism. It is worthy of study for three reasons: because of pure academic interest, because of the clinical and public health need of control, and because in it is written the foundation of human history.

Parasitism is a term coming down from the ancient Greek days of parasites—sharers of the feast, or messmates, to whom no stigma attached, or reproach or contempt. Religious parasites were attached as assistants to the priests to collect the corn dues from farmers on the temple lands or from other sources. It was their province to provide food for temple visitors, to care for certain offerings and to arrange the sacrificial banquets. On the other hand, civil parasites were persons who received invitations to

¹ Presented before the Pasteur Society of Central California, Clift Hotel, San Francisco, September 24, 1930. From the Pacific Institute of Tropical Medicine within the George Williams Hooper Foundation for Medical Research, University of California, San Francisco, California.

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