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AN ANTHROPOLOGIST LOOKS AT MEDICINE

By Professor E. A. HOOTON

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

AN anthropologist looks at medicine very humbly, much as a cat may venture to look at a king. Moreover, the anthropologist, like Kipling's cat, walks by himself and all people are alike to him—even doctors—at any rate as long as he is feeling well. It happens that physical anthropology is the only field of knowledge which concerns itself exclusively with human biology, except medicine. Therefore, from the dim obscurity of speculations upon man's past, present and future, the anthropologist sometimes turns an appraiser, eye upon the practitioners of human biology—those who are not only studying man, but are also doing something to him.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND MEDICINE

Certain differences between the methods and purposes of physical anthropology and of medicine condition the status of each and merit brief discussion. Medicine enjoys a uniquely favorable position among the sciences, because its activities are of immediate or potential concern to every human being. "How do you do?" is a conventional form of greeting, perfunctorily reechoed by way of response to every one except a doctor. There appertains to the healer a certain supernatural sanction, a legacy from the medicine man and the shaman. He works magic—not public magic, which is the province of the priest, and, as such, re-

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