

vision with a sound critical judgment. Let us hope that many of his excellent recommendations may be favorably acted upon in the years to come.

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THE ADVANCE OF MEDICINE

Thus We Are Men. By SIR WALTER LANGDON-BROWN, emeritus professor of physic and fellow of Corpus Christi College in the University of Cambridge. xii + 344 pp. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., London, 1939. 10s. 6d.

The March of Medicine. Selected Addresses and Articles on Medical Topics, 1913-1937. By RAY LYMAN WILBUR, president of Stanford University, California. x + 280 pp. 1938. \$2.75.

Milestones in Medicine: Laity Lectures of the New York Academy of Medicine. Introduction by JAMES A. MILL, president of the New York Academy of Medicine. vii + 276 pp. D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1938. \$2.00.

THESE three volumes have a certain similarity in that they illustrate the manner in which various and diverse individual essays may be integrated about a single theme. This is an increasingly popular way by which busy intellectual leaders may coordinate a series of brief efforts about a more general philosophy.

Sir Walter's volume is deliberately planned in this spirit. Its general theme is stated in the first essay, the 1936 Maudsley Lecture, "The Biology of Social Life," in which it is pointed out that the demands of human evolution for a functioning social unit combining full cooperation with individual freedom are currently causing great stress as we bumble along in trial and error toward a surviving fitness. Psychological factors impose the greatest obstacles in this evolutionary process. To proceed we should learn more about our minds and the way they work. As Sir Thomas Browne phrased it three centuries ago, "Thus we are men and we know not how." Sir Walter's next essay has the provocative title, "We Have Reason to Think." He deals with the perplexing phenomenon of the "retreat from reason" in literature and politics on the basis of individual failure to evolve smoothly from infancy to manhood.

About this theme Sir Walter now plays many variations. A set of six essays deal with psychological states as illustrated from literature and science. The fascinating character of these studies is indicated by the titles: "Myth, Phantasy, and Mary Rose," "Robert Bridges—the Poet of Evolution," "Sir William Osler," "The Psychology of Authorship," "Dr. Jekyll Diagnoses Mr. Hyde" and "The Background to Harvey." In the latter it is recalled that Sir Thomas Browne (1606-1682) first used the word "electricity" and that

he was an experimental scientist of considerable merit, especially in chemical embryology.

Another set of six studies deals with applications of this social and psychological evolutionary idea to art and religion. The discussion on "The Evolution of Death" brings the volume to a notable climax. Sir Walter's great scientific and literary ability make these essays stimulating and delightful reading.

President Wilbur's volume includes twenty-nine addresses delivered at various important functions since 1913 and dealing generally with current non-technical problems of biology, medicine and public health. Many of the earlier ones contain much wisdom resulting from years of experience on methods of teaching in medicine. The later ones are more concerned with the economic consequences of medical advance, and with the social significance of public health. As chairman of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care, Dr. Wilbur summarized his views on these matters in his address before the National Conference on the Costs of Medical Care, at the New York Academy of Medicine, November 29, 1932.

For several years the New York Academy of Medicine has sponsored a series of "Laity Lectures" in which distinguished leaders in various medical fields have summarized recent significant developments in lay terms, or have dealt historically with interesting or practically important lines of progress. In 1936 the lectures were collected in a volume entitled "Medicine and Mankind," and included surveys of anatomy and physiology, an account of the medicine of the Amerinds, constitutional make-up in relation to disease, vitamins and a Carrel mystification on death. The 1937 lectures have now been published under the title "Milestones in Medicine." These titles are not quite appropriate. The books might better be titled "Laity Lectures in Medicine," giving then the year so that the series might be kept distinct.

The current volume includes an historical survey of psychiatry by Smith Ely Jelliffe, a discussion of the mechanisms of heredity by Charles R. Stockard, a diverting discussion of medicine at sea in the days of sail by Karl Vogel, a description of the evolution of the human brain by Frederick Tilney, a stimulating and documented "history of medical history" by Henry E. Sigerist, a historic account of leprosy by Newton E. Wayson and a survey of current knowledge of the glands of internal secretion by Walter Timme. Non-medical scientists will find that these essays afford a pleasant way to follow the historical development of medical ideas. Judicious documentation might add to their value for this purpose without detracting from their readability.

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