

BOOK REVIEW

Doctors to the World. By MURRAY MORGAN. New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1958.
Pp. xv + 271, \$5.00.

To mark its tenth anniversary, the World Health Organization invited two independent writers to observe and record their impressions of different types of WHO activities under conditions and in countries of their own choice. One was an American freelance author and journalist, the other a French novelist.¹ The Organization provided facilities and introductions, but otherwise took no part in the production of the books that resulted. The foregoing is from the WHO *Chronicle* [12 (1958) 280] in which they are discussed and compared, taking into account the different temperaments and viewpoints of their authors and their consequent different approaches.

"Murray Morgan is among those writers who have made a practice of immersing themselves temporarily in the concerns of some large project with the object of interpreting to the general public its aims and working methods. While Gascau identifies himself

¹ GASCAU, PIERRE. *Voyage chez les vivants*. Paris: Gallimard, 1958.

with the suffering peoples of the jungles and deserts he visits, Murray Morgan is concerned with those who come to assist them; he names and describes many of the staff-members he accompanies in their routine work; he reports through their eyes and often in their words. Gascar's book is a traveller's diary in the 19th-century literary tradition, filled with intensely personal reflections, illustrated solely by maps of his journeys, an exploration partly of places and peoples, partly of himself. Murray Morgan's is an objective survey; like the tourist of today he informs himself in advance of what is to be seen, efficiently covers the ground, and does not forget his camera. The writing of Gascar evokes a landscape of pain, famine and solitude against which WHO's battle with disease is waged—his Poe-like vision of the malformations of leprosy and yaws is not easily dismissed from the mind. Murray Morgan's description of leprosy in half a dozen matter-of-fact lines is that of a reporter who observes not only the lesions of the disease (to which he characteristically refers in clinical terms, taking his colour from the medical team with whom he is associating) but also the gay clothes and sociable, prosaic manner of the lepers."

Each of the eleven chapters of *Doctors to the World* deals with a different topic in a different milieu: malaria and mosquito resistance, in Mexico; kwashiorkor, in Central America; rabies of dogs and bats, in Costa Rica and elsewhere; rural health work, in the mountains of El Salvador; sylvian yellow fever, in Colombia and other countries; mixed programs among the Indians of the High Andes of Peru and Bolivia; hunting viruses in Amazonia; schistosomiasis in northeast Brazil; yaws, in Eastern Nigeria; and (to skip a bit) the overall picture of WHO as seen in Geneva at a time when the problem of Asian influenza was waxing large.

At the end of Chapter IX the author says that while in Paraguay and Brazil he had heard of the advances in leprosy due to the new drugs. "Not until I reached the lands lying below the Sahara, however, did I fully realize the leprosy is not a disease of an unfortunate few but a scourge of millions, and that it demands mass campaigns similar to those against tuberculosis, yaws and sleeping sickness." Chapter X (pp. 212-241), recounts his observations while traveling with mobile teams to remote villages of Northern Nigeria and the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. To a leprologist—should there be one—who has not read any such account of the conditions of antileprosy work in those regions, this one will likely offer an interesting contrast with situations with which he is personally familiar. The lay reader would have a strange picture indeed if he were to assume that this account represents antileprosy work in general.

This book is eminently readable and interesting, highly informative of the past and present of many things but without pretense of being other than what it is—a report of the nature of various phases of WHO work over a considerable territory and of how it is being carried out in the face of the problems that are encountered.—H. W. W.

Leprosy in Theory and Practice. R. G. COCHRANE, M.D., Ed. Bristol: John Wright & Sons, Ltd.; Baltimore: The Williams & Wilkins Company, 1959. Pp. xv + 407, with 189 illustrations, some in color; 84s or \$15.

"*Leprosy in Theory and Practice*" is an entirely new work, and not in any sense a second edition of Cochrane's "*Practical Textbook of Leprosy*" of 1947. Authored by 24 students of the many aspects of leprosy, it constitutes a symposium, a crystal with many facets, alive and reflecting remarkably well the numerous spectral lines present within the subject. With multiple authors there is bound to be some repetition, but this does not appear to be serious.

In some cases the coverage is comprehensive in scope, as in the considerations given the treatment of the disease, and the handling of the problems created by nerve damage in the extremities. More than one-fourth of the text covers these areas, which will be welcome to the physician in practice in the field. On the other hand, the five and one-

half pages given to the history of leprosy and its spread through the world yield only a sketchy sense of the importance of the disease, economically, socially, psychologically and medically. Here the reader is left with the feeling of a deficit.

The book is patterned in the traditional manner of dealing with an infectious disease. The bacteriology, epidemiology, pathology and immunology are considered before the signs and symptoms. This will be satisfactory to the person familiar with leprosy, but the person beginning in the subject will have difficulty becoming oriented, and he who would digest the book into a chapter for a text-book of medicine will encounter the impossible.

Although Cochrane has assigned many parts of the writing of the book to others, there is enough from his own pen to enable the reader to learn that the editor is capable of stating his own views with vigor and effect, of incorporating them into objective and valid description, competent to speak in every area in leprosy, and still willing to include in the book some views of others which do not harmonize with his own. The aim of producing a volume intended to be of value first and last to the man who actually treats leprosy is clear. Certainly this book is better suited to this purpose than any of the texts, in any language, of the past. It will prove a valuable ally and every-day tool to the worker in leprosy.

Of the various chapters in the book, one of the most appealing, and at the same time provocative, is that of Cochrane on therapy. Here the author manages to communicate the "problem" of treatment, at the same time giving practical advice, intermingled with therapeutic principles, and some shafts of wisdom. Still further, one encounters some apocrypha such as, "Disease is a general manifestation of a world in chaos, and leprosy has no claim to be considered as a malady apart." This chapter follows, as a strong contrast, Busby's terse, concise chapter on chemotherapy. The fact that a chapter has as a part of its title "control of treatment" is a somewhat indirect statement that sulfone treatments are not thought to be the final word. There is a significant lack in the book of data on treatment, and there is no guide-line by which to gauge progress of a case.

The book is generous in that it gives details of treatments which in actuality may be little used. A small sop is thrown to chaulmoogra (in the persistent case), but one is surprised to see a long paragraph given to the use of trichloroacetic acid to restore pigmentation to depigmented areas.

In the areas in which some recordings of the imagination would be permissible, it is pleasant to find an excellent chapter by Weddell and Palmer on the "neuro-histological changes" in leprosy. Here the authors in most competent fashion illustrate what has been accomplished up to the present in this field of investigation, regardless of any application. The importance of the work is itself. This chapter stands forth as a brightly illuminated island; and if the book has a fault it lies in the overly persistent attention to the practical, and the casual treatment of the theoretical.

Given a subject in which there are such large regions of ignorance as in leprosy, satisfactory consideration of many things must be labelled impossible. An example is the question of transmission of leprosy to animals. It is not possible to criticize what Carpenter contributes to this subject. No writer has covered the topic broadly since Klingmüller's review. Nevertheless, there is a need, as in this volume, for a full statement of the *negativities* in the field, and it would seem that the volume overlooks this opportunity to clarify the accumulated evidence, and to state the problem objectively.

In the field of bacteriology some progress has been made during the past decade, and this is not satisfactorily recorded, except in the matter of electron microscopy. The subject of growth of mycobacteria in cell cultures is unfortunately omitted, and the significance of dye-penetration of bacterial cells is not covered. There is compensation for these omissions, however, in the excellent articles of Riddell and of Feldman on the comparative bacteriology and pathology of mycobacterial infections of animals, subjects ordinarily omitted from treatises on leprosy.

Badger's article on epidemiology serves a purpose in addition to the recording of its content, namely, to stress the lack of an assemblage of the information of the epidemiology of leprosy actually available, widely scattered in journals of many languages, awkward of assimilation, and never correlated. Badger's article must be regarded as a nice beginning, sorely needing alimentation to make it a whole coverage. Immunology receives the necessary discursive remarks, scattered in several places, and is summarized correctly, "Knowledge of the exact . . . processes in leprosy is slight." Cochrane's discussions of the application of BCG vaccination in leprosy are separated from discussion of the lepromin reaction, which latter should enjoy comprehensive coverage.

The book closes—except for ten appendices—with Cochrane's chapter on prevention, which contains the understatement that "rehabilitation is . . . of very great importance in leprosy." Reference to the social problems in leprosy occurs in many places in the volume, although the subject is not specifically covered. To the author-editor, leprosy is "one of the most thrilling and exciting of all diseases." Some persons will prefer a less passionate view, but it must be granted that this passion has produced the most useful book on leprosy to have been written. Those who know the author-editor will naturally have expected a great deal from him, and they will not be disappointed.

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It will be noted that the foregoing review is in certain respects a selective one. In submitting it the reviewer pointed out that he had purposely avoided comment on errors encountered, and that he had not discussed such important chapters as bacteriology, pathology, immunology, classification and reactions in leprosy because it would be difficult to deal with them adequately in a simple review—which is beyond dispute. There could be no review of a chapter on lepromin and the lepromin reaction because there is none, in spite of the theoretical and practical importance of the subject. The technique of preparing lepromin as it is done in practice is not given, although one would expect to find it in a book intended as a "guide to workers in leprosy;" what is referred to in the index under "preparation" is a brief footnote dealing with a very different experimental product.

Note should be made, however, of a peculiar anomaly and a gross error in the chapter on classification, written by the author-editor himself. The existing scheme of classification, developed by a series of international conferences and congresses since 1931 (the last one being the Madrid congress held in 1953) and therefore as "official" as anything of the kind can be, is not given. This is excused by the statement that, because of disagreements, it was not accepted by the Madrid congress, whereas in fact it was accepted and was published in two languages in the official transactions as well as in the Congress Number of *THE JOURNAL* [21 (1953) 504-516]. It was at the Havana congress, five years before, that a part of the report of the then Committee on Classification was rejected. This chapter is in fact mainly an attempt to overthrow the accepted classification as finally set forth at Madrid, in favor of the author's own radically different concept of the basis of classification.—EDITOR.