

BOOK REVIEWS

TOPICS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

JAMES M. MACKINTOSH

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The work of James Mackintosh, which spanned the period of the two world wars, has greatly broadened our concepts of social responsibility in the related fields of health, housing, medical care, and community planning. This slender volume of 19 essays encompasses the full range of his varied interests during a long and fruitful life. Few men in medicine and public health have served in so many capacities—as health officer, medical educator, civil defense administrator, public health historian, student of hospital affairs and social planning, Dean of the London School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and expert guide to nations and institutions in many parts of the world.

We in the Americas have looked upon him for many years with admiration and affection as a wise and canny Scot. From time to time we borrowed him from the British Isles to share his wisdom. The months he spent with us on various occasions during the past 25 years enabled us to see our own problems in a new and illuminating light, and for this we are most grateful. As a tribute to him and as a record of his invaluable services to our country and to the world, the Avalon Foundation and the Milbank Memorial Fund have jointly financed the assembling and republication of his most important contributions.

To this reviewer, the last essay—entitled “American Pilgrimage in Wartime”—recalls an unforgettable memory, for in 1941, long before our entry in the war, we shared a barnstorming tour of 40 states, meeting governors and legislative leaders, and addressing medical societies and public health associations in each of the states, hoping to alert them to the urgent need for preparation of measures essential for the protection of a civilian population in time of war. Whatever success we had can be ascribed to the persuasive influence of this calm and kindly man who had previously served through air raids in Scotland as Chief Medical Officer for Civil Defense.

The other 18 essays will be more rewarding to most readers for they deal importantly with hospitals, child care, the physically handicapped, the teaching and practice of public health, mental health, housing, the care of the aged, accidents, medicine as a social science, and medical care tomorrow. All are written with a grace and a delightful style which provide intellectual pleasure and stimulation. They reflect the wisdom and the intellect of a sage.

GEORGE BAEHR