

THE WORLD IN 1931

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649141029

The world in 1931 by Stewart E. Bruce

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

STEWART E. BRUCE

**THE
WORLD IN 1931**

THE WORLD IN 1931

By
STEWART E. BRUCE



F. L. SEARL & CO.,
110 West 34th St.,
NEW YORK
1921

COPYRIGHT, 1921
BY
STEWART E. BRUCE

HK
S1
311

DEDICATION

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO
THE SEVERANCE CLUB
OF LOS ANGELES, IN APPRECIATION OF THE
DEVOTION OF ITS MEMBERS TO THE CAUSE
OF HUMAN PROGRESS

775003

THE WORLD IN 1931

CHAPTER I

ON account of indifferent health, my physician ordered me to take an extended sea voyage. This peremptory command caused me some moments of perplexment. Had this celebrated medical man more thought for his own relief than for mine? Was he bent on getting rid of a "chronic nuisance", one who could be relieved neither by the gentle art of cajolery nor by that now almost lost art of druggery?

My physician was what might be termed "popular". He was pre-eminently successful in that he always had a waiting list—one to be envied by those of his craft or more strictly speaking "profession". The daily aggregation in his waiting-room consisted largely of the most profitable of all patients and at the same time the most exacting and troublesome—the well ones; for it ever is that Fear and Fancy are the twin branches upon which the doctor's golden dollars grow.

Let this be as it may, my physician's fees were as large as his conscience would dictate and his conscience was most generous if not elastic. Of course, he rendered some service to society without compensation—"For charity", as he observed.

In a moment of callous indifference for the feelings and sensibilities of another, I ventured to ask the doctor how he could reconcile some of his high fees.

"That, my dear sir," he replied, "should be plain to any man of understanding. Smith is in poverty and I cut out his appendix for nothing. Morgan is rich and I remove the wart from the end of his nose and charge him a thousand or two. Thus, you see, I balance the scales between poverty and riches."

"But, Doctor," I rejoined, "how do you claim you performed a charitable act for Smith, when you compel Morgan to pay for both Smith and Morgan?"

The sudden entry of the doctor's wife in the adjoining room prevented an answer to my question. She evidently was in some distress and called out to know the location of a certain bottle of indigestion tablets. The doctor with alacrity left my presence, whether for the purpose of promptly serving his wife or of avoiding my question, I am today, after a lapse of more than ten years, still unable to venture even a guess.

"My dear," said the husband in subdued tones when he reached his wife's side, "when will you ever learn that drugs are not the proper treatment for indigestion? Have I not told you repeatedly in case of such an attack as this to drink a pint of hot water?" The wife disappeared as suddenly as she had entered and again I was face to face with my medical judge and executioner.

In my case drugs had failed; an operation, by no stretch of the imagination, was to be thought of; and it must be said, in addition, that my doctor did not need to perform unnecessary operations for the purpose of revenue. His abundant business removed that contingency.

As a last resort, a prolonged sea excursion was decided upon and that with as much indifference as though he had prescribed a dose of calomel at an expense to me of but a shilling.

Now, there is a certain "sacredness" about a doctor's order. No matter how often your physician renders edicts, and though religiously carried out fail of their purpose, you feel that to disobey at any time would be almost a sacrilege. The regard for the doctor, where there is regard, is almost religious. Indeed, it may be said that it is a form of religion—a species of worship. Like the purveyors of religion, he represents the mysterious—the unknown—the unprovable—and, to all intents and purposes, the infallible.

In the economy of things this all may serve a purpose and who would deny consolation to the weary pilgrim if he or she should find that consolation in the doctor—even to the personal neglect of minister or priest?

But I had now reached that stage, or that "plane" if you will, when my reverence for the doctor, as a doctor, was at a pretty low ebb. I had reached this condition of mind even in the face of the fact that medical science claimed, as one proof of its usefulness, that it has succeeded in lengthening Man's span of life; but in truth it has accomplished this only by denying and withholding from us nearly everything that makes life worth living.

In this attitude I do not wish to be misunderstood. I admit the doctor has at heart the best interests of his patient. I know that at all times he sincerely believes he can do as much for a

suffering mortal as any other doctor with whom he competes and, furthermore, I am convinced that he has and does and will continue to get up the coldest night of a cold winter and respond to a call even if he is certain in advance that he can do nothing for the sufferer; and that he will continue, God willing, to minister "charity" by making Morgan, the millionaire, pay the medical dues of Peter, the penniless.

So, through some ill conceit, I almost had lost faith in the power of my doctor, or of any other doctor, or any combination of doctors, to successfully minister either to my ills or to my idiosyncrasies.

But a suggested sea voyage was something new, had all the elements of an inspiration—a happy, scientific, medical thought or in my case, more strictly speaking,—an after-thought. At last the doctor had gotten down to practical business—something I could understand and grasp, take advantage of and, as the doctor knew, *could pay for*.

* * * * *

It might be well before advancing with this narrative to have a word to say regarding the significance of the phrase I just made use of—"could pay for".

I chanced to be one of those fortunates who could pay for a ninety days' sea sail—either for health or pleasure, or for both. That, no doubt, was one of the reasons why, in his rare judgment, my physician prescribed a sea voyage. Had I been less rich, in the exercise of his power of discrimination and in obedience to those laws