

SCIENTIFIC FEATURES OF MODERN MEDICINE

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Scientific features of modern medicine by Frederic S. Lee

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FREDERIC S. LEE

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Columbia University Lectures

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THE JESUP LECTURES

1911

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LECTURES

SCIENTIFIC FEATURES OF MODERN MEDICINE

BY

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PREFACE

AN appointment to the lectureship founded by an appreciative and generous patron of science, the late Morris K. Jesup, Esq., has given me an opportunity to present some of the striking features of modern medicine which illustrate its genuinely scientific character, its great change from the medicine of the past, and its hopeful outlook for the future. Obviously no attempt could here be made to survey its whole field; but I have endeavored, through a consideration of selected topics, to depict its spirit. Human beings may be divided into those who do, and those who do not, believe in the efficiency of medicine. The relative number of non-believers has always been small, and is doubtless much less now than in the days of the Greeks and of Molière, but their sentiments have ever been loudly proclaimed. It is hoped that these pages may be read by both classes. They may perchance help to fortify the believers, and, if not actually to convert the dissenters, at least to make their doubts appear less rational. The labors of a learned profession can easily be belittled by those who are less learned. I shall be gratified if what I have here written shall be instrumental in inducing laymen to study the human body and appreciate what men of medicine are now doing to maintain health and to prevent, diagnose, treat, and cure disease. When laymen do this, the influence of medical cults and healing sects is sure to decline.

The lectures here published were delivered at the American Museum of Natural History in the city of New York during the months of February and March, 1911. As with previous lectures on the same foundation, the endeavor has been to present the subject matter clear-cut and in language that is

not too technical for the intelligent layman. The latter is often eager to learn, but cannot be criticised if he finds the literature of science written in words that are foreign to his mother tongue. In a few cases I have taken the liberty of quoting from previous writings of my own, without acknowledging the repetition of my language. It has been found impracticable to reproduce the many illustrations that were helpful in the oral presentation of the lectures.

My thanks are due to my colleagues, Professors Francis Carter Wood and Phillip Hanson Hiss, and Drs. W. A. Bastedo and H. H. Janeway, and to other friends, Drs. Simon Flexner, William Hallock Park, James Ewing, Alexis Carrel, Nathan W. Green, and Major F. F. Russell. Several of these friends have read critically portions of my manuscript and have offered helpful suggestions.

FREDERIC S. LEE.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,
October 1, 1911.

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