

REVIEW

Ariel by Felix marti-ibanez, M.D., Editor-in-Chief of M.D., *the Medical News Magazine*, New York. Formerly Professor and Director of the Department of the History of Medicine, New York Medical College, Flower and Fifth Avenue Hospitals. M.D. Publications, Inc., 1962. Pp. 292. Price \$6.50.

The Volume under review is a collection of essays on the arts and the history and philosophy of medicine. This is the fourth book of a series of five, being completed or already completed by the author. The name *Ariel*, given to the book, is quite significant. As is well known, Ariel is the name of the angelic spirit in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, who obeys Prospero's command, and is symbolic of 'unselfish motives in actions' and of the 'spirituality of culture'. It means the mastery of reason over the base urgings of irrationality. In his introduction the author writes: 'one of the twofold root from which these essays spring—his dream that life—the miniature history of each man—and history—the mighty life of nations—should harmonize, so that every individual life may be tinged with history, and history in turn may never lose the humaneness of life.' The ideas and ideals, finding expression in these essays, amply justify the name of the book may at the same time be regarded as a contribution towards the fulfilment of his dream. This has been possible for the author as he is not only a distinguished physician, historian of medicine, and psychologist, but also a novelist, journalist and a wanderer over the globe, who has seen life in all its aspects.

There are 42 essays in the book distributed among nine sections as follows:

I. *Through the Magic Door of Words*.—In the essays under this section the author expresses his admiration for good books and the art of elegant expressions.

II. *The Wonder World of Symbols*.—This is devoted to symbols and symbolism.

III. *The March of Medical History*.—It contains essays portraying the achievements in medicine and surgery since the Prehistoric Age of Babylonian civilization to the present time.

IV. *The Epic of Medicine*.—It includes 13 essays, dealing with the evolution of medicine in relation to the history of civilization. It offers a succinct informative introduction or a dramatic prelude to the history of medicine from the Prehistoric Age to the present time. This is an outstanding feature of the book. The essays constituting this section are thus significantly named:

Epic of Medicine, Prelude of Mist (*Prehistoric and Magic Medicine*), Lands of Sun, Lands of Death (*Mesopotamian and Egyptian Medicine*, 6000 B.C. to 600 B.C.), At Dawn the Sun Shines (*Greek Medicine*, 776 B.C. to 285 B.C.), Torrent of Lions (*Medicine in Imperial Rome*, 285 B.C. to A.D. 476), Through a Stained Glass Window (*Byzantine Medicine*, A.D. 476 to A.D. 1453), While Schehirazade tells Her Tales (*Arabian Medicine*, A.D. 733 to A.D. 1096), The Cross and the Eagle (*Monastic and University Medicine*, A.D. 1096 to A.D. 1453), In a Sunlit Garden (*Medicine in the Renaissance*, A.D. 1453 to A.D. 1600), Whirlwind in the Soul (*Medicine in the Baroque Age*, A.D. 1600 to A.D. 1700), Stars and Glow Worms (*Medicine in the Enlightenment*, A.D. 1700 to A.D. 1800), Tapestry with Figures (*Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*) and The Vast Threshold (*Medicine in the Twentieth Century*).

The observations of the author at the conclusion of this section is worth quoting here:

‘If medieval medicine—“Gothic medicine” I would call it—soared vertically, even as the spires in Gothic cathedrals did, in search of God and the soul, and if Renaissance medicine spread horizontally to explore the nature of man, even as the navigators of the time explored the seas of the earth, contemporary “neo-Gothic” medicine combines the horizontal and spatial exploration of man’s body with the vertical and historical exploration of his biological biography and his mind.

‘But medicines’ greatest conquest in the future will not be that of cosmic outer space, not even that of man’s physical and mental inner space, but the reconquest of science and love for man as enjoined, more than 2,000 years ago, by a venerable Greek physician in his oath of ethics and morals, an oath that still guides the physician of our Space Age, who is becoming even more the best ambassador of good will among men and of health and peace on earth. Thus, the Epic of Medicine will continue forever its search for new horizons to conquer, as the most noble expression of man’s quasi-divine urge to be of service to man.’

V. The section on *Journeys, Sports and Peoples* contains essays on the human family throughout the world and their sufferings, struggles and hopes of more or less identical character, the connection between medicine and travel, the meaning of sports, witchery of the sea, etc.

VI. The art of love, both normal and erotic, and female psychology constitute the subjects treated with in this section on *Love, Lust and Letters*.

VII. The glory and marvel of the human organs like the face, the hand and the eye have been related and extolled in this section on *The Marvels of Man*.

VIII. In the essays of this section on *The Philosophy of Medicine* the author asserts that medicine is art, but it is also science, and always philosophy.

IX. As philosophy cannot survive without religion, the author in his essays under this final section, *Religio Medici*, defines his creed relating to the requirements and duties of a physician and a student of medicine and sets forth the concept that the 'history of medicine must be a sociological instead of an introcentric history'. To quote his own words further:

'I also support the idea that instead of the present day "fire brigade" therapies, which through shocks to its organs destroy so much of the human being, just as firemen destroy so much in order to extinguish fire, medicine must really become medical anthropology, must become more universal and comprehensive, less "shocking" and more whole, more humane and less technological.

'This volume is an impassioned plea for the physician to remember constantly that to be a good doctor he must before all else know how to be a man.'

The essays contained in the volume treat a wide variety of human experience and present a singularly perceptive analysis of the relation between the arts and medicine from the historical standpoint.

Written in a captivating style, with the eye and the art of a poet, all the essays in *Ariel* sparkle with stimulating ideas and ideals, which will appeal to all classes of readers—physician, philosopher, sociologist, educators, student and layman—who take delight in fine literature.

P. RÂY.