FOREWORD TO THE AMERICAN EDITION

THE ancient Greek poets sang of health as the greatest gift of the gods. Today less than ever can we deny the truth of their song, though the idea of what constitutes health has developed into a very much broader concept than it was centuries ago.

Health, which usually we appreciate only when we have it not, is the most important factor in life, not to the individual alone, but to society. Health is, however, not merely a question of organs, normal in the sense that the microscope will reveal no physical aberrations; it means, as well, a proper functioning and interrelation of the various tissues of the body, and their adequate response to physical, chemical, mental and emotional stimuli. That such a definition of health includes normal sex functions is, or should be, self evident.

I believe it is not exaggerating to say that disturbances of the sexual apparatus cause more mental anguish and emotional upsets, aside from physical suffering, than any other lesions. And yet, until recently, the forces of taboo, intolerance and hypocrisy have succeeded in banishing instruction in this most important domain of sex, to the realm of chance and gossip, with the result that fancy and superstition have replaced factual knowledge.

It is high time that this state of affairs be remedied. It is high time that the warped individual to whom sex and

immorality are synonymous, be restrained from persecuting serious works on sexual problems. Of late there is indeed some hope of finally accomplishing this, for it certainly is a sign of progress that a jury conviction of Mary Ware Dennett, for selling her pamphlet "The Sex Side of Life," was overturned by the judges of the Circuit Court of Appeals. The sagacious decision handed down by Federal Judge John M. Woolsey in the Stopes case was another step forward. What we need is not a veiling and concealment of sex, but sane and unbiased instruction which, in a simple, and yet in a complete and authoritative manner, will discuss the problems of sex, and emphasize the importance of normal sex functions to the general bodily health.

It is with such a purpose in view that the present volume, now admirably translated into English, was written by two German physicians. The book offers, to my mind, one of the sanest discussions yet presented to the public. One may not agree with all the authors' views. One may wish that the deleterious influence of venereal diseases on the individual and on the offspring were stressed more. One may even consider that the discussion of the "double standard" is rather futile (because the essentially monogamous psyche of the average woman is, after all, not a product of fetters or freedom), though admittedly there is much food for consideration in the carefully measured views of the authors. These, however, are but minor points in a generally excellent volume. The anatomical chapters alone would amply justify its publication. Of course there may be some who will object to illustrations of the sex organs, in a volume

for lay consumption, on grounds of immorality. Let us gently remind such objectors that, after all, the immorality resides not in the really magnificent plates, but in their own minds.

Aside from the strictly anatomical and physiological chapters of the book, the chapter on puberty is worth learning by heart by all parents, and the discussions on the sex impulse in man and woman will give increased understanding to those contemplating marriage. That a chapter of the volume has been devoted to sex abnormalities, I consider most fortunate. There is no field where ignorance is more prevalent than here, so that sex abnormalities have become the subject of coarse jokes, or oftentimes are indiscriminately classed as crimes.

Some of the authors' remarks on the misinterpretation of the work of Freud have struck a responsive chord in my heart. Maltreated and mutilated, the theories of Freud have been bandied about by the untrained—even in best sellers—for untrained, and often half-baked readers; until the work of a really brilliant man has, for many, come to be synonymous with filth.

It is tempting to add further discussion, but the book speaks for itself. The rabid sex reformers will be disappointed, some purists will perhaps be shocked, but to the balanced reader this sane and unbiased discussion of sex, its functions and problems, will assuredly be welcome.

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