

Book Reviews

ensure the accuracy of the bibliographical references, which includes the library's press-marks for all the books cited. The important bibliography at the end of the book will be much used by those who wish to pursue this subject further.

A special word of praise should be given to the publishers (Olivier Perrin) for the flawless production where the beauty of the printing types matches that of the magnificent illustrations. This is a book which should be available in every library, but even more it is a book to own and to browse in as sheer indulgence and with no thought of self-instruction.

F. N. L. P.

Charles V. Chapin and the Public Health Movement, by JAMES H. CASSEY, Harvard Univ. Press, and London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1962, pp. 310, frontis., 46s.

This book gives a vivid picture of a man whose devotion to duty as a health officer altered the whole concept of public health in the United States. Charles Chapin's open mind and strong critical sense led him in forty years through every advance in municipal sanitation from garbage collection to healthy dirt, and from the vague filth ideas on communicable diseases to their real causes through laboratory investigation.

He started his work in Providence City in 1885 with no background education for his self-imposed duties; none was available. He saw he must build his own structure on the scaffolding suggested by the Public Health movement in Great Britain and by his own experience, and for which he had seen the urgent need when he sensed as a student and an interne the scepticism and the plea for observation that lay behind the new teachings of W. H. Welch and W. C. Gorgas on laboratory research. His task was not made any easier by the conservatism of his fellow citizens and of the local practitioners, many of whom had little basic knowledge and poor ethical standards. But Chapin overcame resistance by gentle persuasion and personal example.

His first objective in a city with poor and dangerous sanitary arrangements was pure air, pure water and pure soil, but with developing ideas on the value of isolation and fumigation in the control of such diseases as scarlet fever and diphtheria he was not afraid to publicize his changing beliefs. He could then say that the true public health official was not the head of a cleansing department, that there was a difference between measures for comfort and measures for health, and that personal hygiene would do far more than 'the expiatory sacrifice of disinfection'.

The mention of a few of his accomplishments will show his wide interests and unbounded energy. He set public health administration and legislation on the sure foundation of hard-won experience; he set up the first City Bacteriological Laboratory in the United States; he collected vital statistics in the interests of the new epidemiology, instituted medical inspection of school children, and proposed the first governmental programme of care for the sick poor, which he urged should be combined with preventive medicine. By 1916 he could report on the public health conditions of the country, and so was able to advise, when America entered the First World War, on healthy food for the civilian population, and on the measures for possible control of tuberculosis, venereal disease, pneumonia and meningitis in the military camps.

Showers of honorary degrees and medals made no difference to him; the man who had become a benefactor to his city, his country and to mankind remained the old-world gentleman of quiet charm. Charles V. Chapin was indeed a great man.

R. R. TRAIL