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HOMO SAPIENS—WHENCE AND WHITHER¹

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INTRODUCTION

THE male human creature in our society is supposed to have "come of age" when he has completed his twenty-first year. An alleged scientist ought to have attained his majority when he has passed the twenty-first anniversary of his professional career. Unfortunately he may remain forever a minor, even if he has reached the "age of discretion." Nevertheless, I propose to survey the increments to our knowledge of that animal, man, during the past score and odd of years, whether my utterances be the brash pipings of the callow juvenile, the resounding platitudes of waisty middle age or the reminiscent quaverings of senility. In any event, I firmly absolve my-

¹The thirteenth annual Sigma Xi lecture, given at a joint session of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Society of Sigma Xi, Pittsburgh, Pa., December 28, 1934.

self from responsibility for the anthropological accretions of which I here take note, since any pebble which I in passing may casually have dropped upon the rock pile, has simply disappeared in the chinks between the ponderous contributions of my more substantial colleagues. In short, like the famous young man on the hearse, I have just come for the ride.

NEW VIEWS OF PREHUMAN PROBLEMS

One may well begin with some new angles from which recent observers have viewed prehuman problems. These are zoological angles rather than mathematical angles. Nevertheless, some of them are acute and others are obtuse. The first problem which may be viewed thus askance is that of the origin of the primates. (I refer to the zoological order rather than to the ecclesiastical order.) The research of the last two decades has aroused suspicion that the primates

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