The Importance of Cooperative Studies of the Biology of Man: Professor Lee R. Dice

By Professor Lee R. Dice

THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATIVE STUDIES OF THE BIOLOGY OF MAN

MAN is to-day the most studied of animals. He is being investigated by anthropologists, anatomists, physiologists, bacteriologists, parasitologists, pathologists, geneticists, psychologists, psychiatrists, ecologists, and other specialists in many sub-branches of the broad field of biology. Most of these investigators are fully competent and the results of their researches are of high value. An increase in the volume of research in every one of these fields would be profitable and very desirable. I venture to suggest, however, that in addition to the studies now being made of man in each of these special divisions of science, it would be highly profitable to study also the whole man in relation to his heredity and to his environment. In making this suggestion I am well aware that numerous investigations of man now in progress or recently completed involve several diverse subdivisions of biology. However, no investigation or group of investigations now in progress is in my opinion sufficiently comprehensive to secure anything like a complete picture of man the animal, as he exists in this constantly changing world.

Every human being is the product of his heredity and of his environment. Arguments about which of the two is the more important are futile, because no group of hereditary factors in sperm or egg can produce an individual organism except through interaction with the environment. Neither can the environment produce any organism without the presence of a group of hereditary factors combined in a reproductive unit of some kind. We can and should, however, measure to the best of our ability the role that each hereditary factor and each feature of the environment plays in the production and maintenance of the individual and of the race and species.

The importance of heredity in the development of
Editor's Summary

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