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THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PASTEUR TO MEDICINE AND HUMANITY¹

IN his éloge of Littré, Pasteur, speaking of the Greeks, says these words: "Ce sont eux qui nous ont legué un des plus beaux mots de notre langue, le mot enthousiasme—un Dieu intérieur. La grandeur des actions humaines se mesure à l'inspiration qui les a fait naître. Heureux celui qui porte en soi un dieu. . . ."²

Enthusiasm—a God within! Happy indeed is he who bears this "God within"! The son of a tanner, a non-commissioned officer of the Armies of Napoleon, Pasteur was born at Dôle in the Franche Comté on 27 December, 1822. His first studies were at the Collège d'Arbois, whither his parents moved while he was yet a baby. In 1839, he entered the Lycée of Besançon, where he received his Baccalaureat ès arts. In 1842, he became Bachelier ès sciences. In the same year he entered the École normale supérieur, fifteenth out of a class of twenty-two. Dissatisfied with this rank he resigned and went to Paris to an institution directed by a compatriot in the impasse des Feuillantines. There he followed courses at the Lycée St. Louis and listened to the lectures of Dumas at the Sorbonne. At the end of the year, he was admitted fourth in rank to the École normale. Not remarkable as a student, he was classed seventh in his examinations for license, and third out of four candidates who were received at the Concours d'agrégation; and when he presented himself for his Doctorat, his two theses received but mediocre appreciation.

But this modest student bore a "God within" which led him on his way. That pathway was singularly straight and direct, for, as has been pointed out by many, the logical sequence throughout all Pasteur's work is striking and remarkable.

Beginning as a chemist he was led fatally into questions of general biology and thence to questions of pathology and therapy, animal and human. To the careless eye the way might seem winding and beset

¹ Address delivered at the Sorbonne on May 22, 1923, on the occasion of a meeting organized by the American Committee for the Commemoration of the Pasteur Centenary.

² "They have given us one of the most beautiful words of our language, the word enthusiasm—a God within. The grandeur of the acts of men is measured by the inspiration from which they spring. Happy is he who bears a God within!"

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