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## CONTENTS

<i>Bonds of Union between Tropical Medicine and General Medicine</i> : DR. ANDREW WATSON SELLARDS .....	93
<i>Nomina Conservanda</i> : PROFESSOR J. CHESTER BRADLEY .....	100
<i>Scientific Events:</i>	
<i>A Code of Ethics for Scientific Men; The World List of Scientific Bibliography; A Census of Water-fowl; The Study of Epidemic Encephalitis; The Rockefeller Foundation</i> .....	103
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i> .....	106
<i>University and Educational Notes</i> .....	109
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:</i>	
<i>The Variable Echoes produced by the Lincoln Memorial</i> : DR. C. A. BROWNE. <i>The Lumell Herbarium</i> : DR. J. ARTHUR HARRIS. <i>Index Kewensis</i> : DR. ARTHUR W. HILL. <i>The Use of the Generic Name Wilsonia</i> : W. C. TOEFELMAN. <i>A Note on the History of Anthropology</i> : DR. ROBERT H. LOWIE. <i>Professorships in Medical Schools</i> : DR. WILLIAM PEPPER .....	109
<i>Quotations:</i>	
<i>The Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine</i> .....	112
<i>Muscle, Yeast and Cancer Cells</i> : PROFESSOR C. D. SNYDER .....	112
<i>Special Articles:</i>	
<i>Graphic Treatment of Euler's Equations</i> : PROFESSOR CARL BARUS. <i>The Seat of the Formation of Amino Acids in Pyrus Malus L.</i> : DR. WALTER THOMAS .....	114
<i>Science News</i> .....	x

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## BONDS OF UNION BETWEEN TROPICAL MEDICINE AND GENERAL MEDICINE<sup>1</sup>

It is my wish that my first greeting and that my parting words should express my appreciation of the honor and the pleasure of visiting you here in Porto Rico. It is distinctly profitable to me to have this opportunity of exchanging ideas and experiences with you in our chosen field of work. In arranging for our conference this evening Dr. Lambert wrote to me suggesting that my talk ought to have a title, and he even ventured to hope that this idea would not come as too much of a surprise to me. So I have selected a subject that will permit us to wander where fancy leads, perhaps, who can tell, to one or two unexpected developments.

Our crowded activities grant us but little time for reflection, and it is easy to overlook points of contact between the adjacent fields such as tropical and general medicine. Inevitably, these two fields have exerted a profound influence on each other.

Strangely enough, the conception of tropical medicine is rather foreign to many individuals in the profession at home. The very name sometimes tends to frighten people away. To a few, it represents merely a curiosity, interesting but unimportant. One of your obligations will be to arouse still further the interest and support in New York City of your work here. One summer I met an elderly physician who had spent his life travelling in the tropics. He said to me: "Merely, no, I stay on the ship. I never look at those patients ashore. Why should I clutter up my head with all that nonsense? If I ever had to treat those diseases I'd go somewhere and take a month's course in the subject." A few of the more serious minded deceive themselves into thinking that tropical medicine represents a real opportunity to make distinctive discoveries of new etiologic agents and new and important clinical entities almost without effort. Sometimes I feel that my friends almost take it to heart that the generosity of nature in tropical lands should cheat industry and so rudely violate the stern principles of no reward without great labor.

<sup>1</sup> A popular address delivered on February 22, 1927, as visiting lecturer at the School of Tropical Medicine, University of Porto Rico, San Juan, Porto Rico.

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