The Body Physiologic and the Body Politic:

By Dr. WALTER B. CANNON

GEORGE HIGGINSON PROFESSOR OF PHYSIOLOGY, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

At this bewildering time, when ancient customs are not respected, when new forms of society are being advocated and tried, when doubts cloud plans for present and future action, it is pertinent to inquire whether we might seek and find a social organization which would yield more of the benefits of security than we now enjoy. This search is natural. In the evolution and behavior of living beings the trend towards security has been one of the outstanding features. The oyster's shell, the bird's quick wings, the tiger's teeth and such human devices as clothing, houses and the varieties of insurance illustrate the universality of provisions for assured existence. The

1 Address of the retiring president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Philadelphia, December 27, 1940. This essay is an elaboration of ideas expressed in an epilogue to a volume published in 1932, entitled "The Wisdom of the Body."