

SANTE ET SOCIETE. (Editions de la Chronique Sociale de France, Lyon; 950 francs.)

L'EXPERIMENTATION HUMAINE EN MEDECINE. (Lethielleux, Paris: Cahiers Laënnec; 475 francs.)

The danger of the specialist lies often in his inability to see beyond his speciality, and thus, failing to perceive the general pattern of the wood for his own particular tree, the knowledge he acquires in that very speciality is of lesser value.

This danger takes on a particularly ominous hue when the content of the speciality is man himself, that is, some particular aspect of man—how he supports himself and orders his goods—which is Economics; how he lives in society—which is Sociology; what goes wrong with his body—which is Medicine; or with his mind—which is Psycho-pathology, and so on.

So vast are the realms which must be explored under each of these and other headings that it would take real wisdom to form a comprehensive picture. So busy may we be with the evaluation and classification of the various characteristics of man that we may well forget man's essential nature, that of a rational being compounded of immortal soul and physical body, a being with rights and responsibilities and having an eternal destiny.

In *Santé et Société*, the report of the 28th session of the Semaine Sociale de France held at Montpellier in 1951, we have a series of lectures, each by a distinguished expert, which covers practically the whole field of Social Science with regard to those aspects of Medicine which have social implications. This is an important book and one which cannot fail to produce in the intelligent reader a most remarkable picture. Little is left out: eugenic problems, psychological problems, the relationship which exists between doctor and patient in the 'Welfare State', man's rights to life, the rights of society and the individual, abortion, artificial insemination, the tension between security and liberty—these are but a few of the subjects which are brought into comprehensive moral perspective.

The authors of the various sections, each expert within his own sphere, delight us in showing just how much of their own speciality can contribute to the general idea of 'health', and how much can hinder or detract from the fullness of human nature. They sometimes see dangers from within, but are men enough to see them as dangers. There is neither doctrinaire praise nor reactionary condemnation: the opinions expressed are balanced and moderate, and the whole book is of a high intellectual standard.

If one were suddenly asked about the morality of using human beings for medical experiments, one's first reactions would probably be of horror, but a little thought will show that such experiments are in reality everyday occurrences. After all, every new drug has to be used for the first

time on someone, and its effect on the human being cannot be certainly known from animal experiments. Every new operation has to be performed on a man for a first time, too, and however much animal experimentation has gone before, the effects on man remain until then but a probability.

If, then, we cannot dismiss the whole subject with a comprehensive veto, we must go further into it, and seek to apply moral principles to the various circumstances to which research and applied therapeutics give rise. For example, to what extent is it justifiable to withhold a therapeutic agent from the 'controls' in a 'controlled experiment'?

*L'Experimentation Humaine en Médecine* goes into the whole subject of human experimentation fully—sometimes unnecessarily fully—from an historical, practical and moral point of view. The chapter entitled 'Moral Reflections' is especially good, but there are many pages of detail of French legislation of relatively little interest on the British reader. A chapter on the experiments carried out in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany is of great interest and goes to show how far below the requirements of the Natural Law those responsible fell.

What should be our guide? In brief, the doctor must always recognise his patient to be fully human and fully free. Accept these two, and most of the moral problems will solve themselves. BRIAN JOHNSON

INUK. By Roger P. Buliard. (Macmillan; 21s.)

*Inuk* carries in its title at once the Eskimo's proud boast of his self-sufficiency, and the Eskimo's challenge to the Christian. For 'Inuk' is 'the man', the Eskimo; while the Eskimo's nearest neighbour, the Indians, are 'the lice', and the white men are 'the big eyebrows'. Only the Eskimo is the man, the man of the far frozen North, the man of the Barren Lands, the man who found a living in a land that daunted all others.

Fr Buliard has spent fifteen years among the Eskimos of the Coppermine River and Victoria Island, the latter the farthest north of all the Eskimos. He has lived with them as an Eskimo, learning to build igloos, to handle a team of huskies, to hunt for fish, seals, caribou, even for polar bears; learning also something of what it means to be an Eskimo. The Eskimo is a savage in a savage land. The Arctic is not the place for the young, the old and the sick, and so the Eskimo is a child-murderer, and will abandon the sick and the old to die alone. The Arctic is a hunter's land, so the Eskimo women are chattels to be thrown from one hunter to another, indispensable igloo-keepers to be fought over. Yet the Eskimo has two great redeeming virtues, a boundless self-less hospitality and an intrepid courage.

Such is *Inuk*, vividly, picturesquely and sympathetically portrayed by Fr Buliard, the noble ignoble savage his land has made him. To redeem him from evil and ignorance the Christian must bear to Inuk the Man, Christ. To that task Fr Buliard and his companions dedicate their lives, for that work they lay them down. J.S.