LIVROS — BOOK REVIEWS


From time to time one chances on a book which refuses to be put down until it has been read from cover to cover. Kitzmiller’s “Anopheine Names” falls in such a category, but I hasten to add it was not non-stop reading on my part. The book is much too long (and I am a slow reader). However, like a butterfly flitting from flower to flower, I found myself leafing here and there for “nectar delights”, searching for entomological heroes of yesteryear who had been blessed with assignments to some far away romantic spot. Perhaps I am biased in my thoughts since all of my life I have yearned for a life abroad, and, indeed, I began such a career at the age of seven. It wasn’t until college days, however, when I had ample opportunity to glean among the tropical medicine, travel and natural history books of my college library that my imagination was really fired to the point where tropical service had to be my goal. I avidly read accounts of 18th and 19th century naturalists and medical officers who were unravelling the mysterious life cycles of parasites, pathogens, mosquitoes and what not in such distant places as the Straits Settlements, the Western Ghats, the upper reaches of the Congo, etc. What I’m trying to say is that I wanted to experience the (to me) exciting lives of such heroes as RONALD ROSS (1857), WILHELM SCHUFFNER (1867), OSWALDO CRUZ (1872), MALCOLM WATSON (1873), RICKARD CHRISTOPHERS (1873), JACQUES SCHWETZ (1876), EMILE BRumpt (1877), CARLOS CHAGAS (1879), EMILE ROBAUD (1882), JOHN SINTON (1884), RAYMOND SHANNON (1894), and a host of others. Many of these tropical medicine specialists (medical men, entomologists, parasitologists, etc.) bear names well known in the field, but there are others more obscure and how much do we really know about any of them? What were their origins, what was their schooling and what influenced their lives? How did it happen they were posted to Sarawak or Timbuktu? How did a medical doctor become involved in mosquito taxonomy or mosquito control? Obituaries and biographies abound but they are widely scattered. The stories are all here (or most of them); some read like western thrillers or John Masters’ “The Lotus and the Wind”, vide bayleyi. Jim Kitzmiller has put together a fascinating account of one aspect of tropical medicine history through his biographical accounts of a multitude of individuals associated with anopheline mosquitoes. These sketches may be very detailed (witness over 5 pages devoted to
Clara Ludlow) and provide an enlightening insight into the development of knowledge on a variety of diseases but with emphasis on malaria. One poignant historical reminder are the names of those workers whose lives were cut short in the World War II conflict in the Pacific. Not only are all patronyms beautifully and painstakingly researched but other specific (and generic) epithets of a descriptive or geographic nature are analyzed in a most scholarly fashion. It has always unsettled me that so many young students fail to understand the naming of the insects they are working with. A part of the fun of studying a group of animals (or plants) is in knowing their historical background. This book is a most useful and entertaining aid in this respect, especially to young culicidologists but also to the broader group of biologists as well. I note with pleasure the book’s dedication to JOHN ALEXANDER REID, outstanding student of southeast Asian anopheline biology and classification. Time has not permitted reading all of the 767 entries, but rest assured they will be read by me and many times over. Very few errors mar the book. Aside from some printer's errors, the following are noted: p. 173 (edwardsi) spelling of Blephariceridae (par. 4); p. 177 (emilianus) spelling of Emilio; p. 187 (Feltinella) spelling of Ephraim; p. 481 (sawyeri) spelling of Hudson (par. 3); p. 491 (shannoni) discovery and isolation of yellow fever virus from Haemagogus, with due respect to Ray Shannon, is a controversial subject involving several investigators and is perhaps best stated in a less definitive manner. Shannon’s posting to Trinidad was to a Rockefeller Foundation malaria laboratory; the Trinidad Regional Virus Laboratory was established after the war in 1954. A frequently cited biographical reference in the text is that of Pamela Gilbert which is “lost” on p. 589; it would have been helpful to list it again among the “G's” on p. 596.


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