

Mankind through the Zoologist's Looking-glass

So many social questions are dealt with today as though conditions are entirely of man's own making, and their correction is within man's power, that it is refreshing to find the Zoologist's answers given a place in our current writings. If mankind is primarily another species in the animal kingdom, why are not his problems more often approached with this basic assumption in the foreground?

The reader of James G. Needham's recently published book, "About Ourselves," will be led to understand how integral a part of the animal kingdom *Homo sapiens* is. The simple, clear and pleasantly humorous style leads one to see how each bodily function of man has its counterpart among animals,—and yet how man goes far beyond other species in his instincts, folkways and reason, even though these distinctions are matters of degree rather than kind.

Man is pictured as a species in which social behavior is as inherent as is his erect posture. Human behavior emerges as largely instinctive, and upon our instincts are superimposed folkways, and upon these, rational behavior. Out of folkways have evolved language, money and customs, upon which much that is peculiarly human is based.

Especially pertinent at this time, war, government and religion are shown to be natural outgrowths of the expression of man's behavior pattern. All three,—warfare, government, and religion, are social enterprises,—with their roots in the biology of the species.

In the midst of our present war hysteria,—to read the last half of this book, if no more, is to get the feeling of coming out suddenly into the light, of breathing clean air again,—of putting first things first. This book won't stop any war, but it will clarify the underlying issues considerably. Sociologists, economists, and politicians especially, should read, "About Ourselves."—*J. W. Price.*

About Ourselves, by James G. Needham. xi+276 pp. Lancaster, Pa., The Jacques Cattell Press, 1941. \$3.00.