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A TEXT-BOOK OF MENTAL DEFICIENCY

A. F. Tredgold


The newest edition of this standard and authoritative work is evidence of the increasing interest taken in all that bears on the social aspects of deficiency. Thus extensive changes have been made in the chapters on etiology, with especial reference to heredity, and that on sociology, in which the number and fertility of defectives, illegitimacy, venereal disease, crime and pauperism among them, their employability, and finally methods of prevention by sterilization and otherwise, are discussed. Many other alterations have been made in the book, to keep it in line with recent research. The chapter on pathology, however, is still unsatisfactory, undue weight being given to unconfirmed or antiquated work.

THE OCCUPATIONAL TREATMENT OF MENTAL ILLNESS

John Ivon Russell

(Baillière, Tindall and Cox, London. 1937. 6s.)

As a practical manual this work is excellent. The account of the theoretical and clinical problems involved is unsatisfactory, but as the work is written primarily not for physicians but for mental hospital nurses, upon whom the carrying out of occupational treatment mainly falls, this is not a grave defect. The presentation is easy to follow, as well as likely to arouse the enthusiasm without which occupational therapy cannot succeed. In the first half of the book the organization and daily practice of the treatment is outlined, with some clinical descriptions, and in the remainder (compiled with the help of craftsmen in the hospital of which Dr. Russell is Superintendent) the procedure in various useful occupations is concisely but adequately explained.

PETER KÜR TEN: A STUDY IN SADISM

George Godwin

(The Acorn Press, London. 1938. 5s.)

Any narrative of the astonishing career of Peter Kürten, the so-called “Monster of Düsseldorf,” cannot fail to evoke general interest. Psychologists too have their special reasons for tracing the mental processes which led to the diversity and magnitude of this murderer’s record, and he is at times held up as the outstanding instance of a sadist at war with society. The interplay of the factors of heredity with those engendered by deplorable mishandling in childhood, and later by twenty-five years of incarceration, add to the complexity and interest of the case. Medico-legal practitioners will also be intrigued by certain of the aspects, and especially by the problem of Kürten’s responsibility in law. Nevertheless, it is not easy to determine why this little study was published or for what class of reader it is
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intended. Little or no documentation is given of the criminal story, and the psychology is treated only sketchily. The author has obviously borrowed heavily from the material contained in Professor Berg's exhaustive article in the *Deut. Ztschr. f. d. ges. Gerichtl. Med.* for 1931.

It is unsatisfactory to find even in a pseudo-scientific work evidences of errors in fact, and the mis-spelling of proper names does not serve as a recommendation. Apparently this essay was originally intended as a preface to an English version of the history of Peter Kurten which is to appear later from the pen of Professor Berg himself. Those who are interested in medical slants on criminology will await this latter monograph with lively anticipation.

PAPERS ON PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

E. Jones

(Bailliére, Tindall and Cox, London. 1938. 25s.)

The fourth edition of Dr. Jones's book contains 32 articles published previously in various journals. They are classified into general papers, papers on dreams, clinical papers, and papers on child study. In each section the papers are arranged roughly in historical order; in spite of many footnotes and postscripts, a number of the papers are mainly of historical interest. The author rightly anticipates the reader's question: "Why the paper on recent advances in psychoanalysis (1920) is not followed by another on more recent advances." The reader would have been the more interested, because Dr. Jones tells him that such a paper could not have been a simple summary of Professor Freud's later writings, since some of the most recent advances are still under discussion.

As it stands, the book does not attempt to give an account of the whole field of psychoanalysis. The subjects chosen are dealt with interestingly. The articles are comprehensible even to the non-sectarian, though he may have difficulty sometimes in accepting some symbols or interpretations as "evident." Of great interest to the psychiatrist are Dr. Jones's views on the Future of Psychoanalysis, and on Psychoanalysis and Psychiatry. In the article dealing with the future he says that he "scarcely anticipates much help from such fields as anthropology, political economy, or sociology..." More perhaps may be expected from biochemistry and especially from comparative psychology."

The paper on Psychoanalysis and Psychiatry contains among other points a theory on the interaction of toxic and psychological factors in organic illnesses. The views about the origin of "mental morbidity" developed therein are certainly not much different from the "multidimensional" diagnosis aimed at by modern psychiatrists. The glossary will be welcome to both medical and psychological readers. A complete index adds to the value of the book.

MANUAL OF PSYCHIATRY AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Aaron J. Rosanoff, M.D.


This standard text-book has been largely rewritten, and the lack of incongruities between the old and new material is evidence of the task having been well done. An effective plan of division of the book, especially from the standpoint of the student, is adhered to. The first portion provides a general orientation in regard to etiology, symptomatology, and neuropsychiatric syndromes in the broader sense, as well as some consideration of organic pathology. This is followed by a detailed consideration of particular neuropsychiatric conditions, grouped according to a classification of the
author's, based in so far as possible on aetiology. Space is fairly apportioned between the organic and functional disorders, but in regard to the latter a rather unorthodox grouping is adhered to. Manic depressive insanity is accorded a place, but one looks in vain for the usual headings of schizophrenia and the psychoneuroses, ultimately to find them rather indiscriminately presented under the title of "chaotic sexuality." Here, also, the author partly abandons his eclecticism and shows a marked leaning toward psychoanalytic concepts. Therapy is well if rather briefly presented, and the chapter dealing with psychoanalytic technique is more than ordinarily palatable. Mental hygiene is considered from a very broad aspect, and includes the problems of eugenics, sociology, control of venereal disease, and drug addiction. A brief discussion of psychogenic disturbances in children is given.

A chapter on special diagnostic procedures is well worth the space. A glossary of psychiatric terminology is included in the general index, a practice which does not enhance the value of either. An adequate bibliography follows each chapter. The book embodies most of the recent advances in the field, but omission of any mention of electroencephalography and a scant page devoted to the shock treatment of schizophrenia seem rather lamentable in a text-book bearing the date 1938 on its title page.

ESSENTIALS OF PSYCHIATRY

George W. Henry

(3rd Edition. Baillière, Tindall and Cox, London. 1938. 22s. 6d.)

This book is unequal in its value. It is helpful to the student in those parts in which the author gives mere descriptions of the various diseases or where he deals with practical questions, such as psychiatric nursing, a chapter which is usually neglected in most of the common text-books. In these chapters the author's great clinical experience shows itself. Where the reader is introduced to general psychopathology, however, matters are often simplified in an astonishing way. In dealing with psychotic phenomena too much stress is laid on psychological interpretations which are derived from psychoanalysis, individual psychology, and analytical psychology. In the chapter on "Personality Disorders" the impression is obtained that practically all psychotic symptoms may be interpreted by these psychological methods. "In those disorders characterized by delusions the affected person obtains protection from the recognition of personal inferiorities, failures, and discrepancies by transferring the responsibility from them to others... It appears in such conditions" (catatonic states) "that the struggle between the social and more primitive desires is so keen that a disorganization of the personality has resulted... Hysteria, a third form of psychoneurosis, usually has its origin in forbidden sexual experiences which may be real or fantasied and which occur in childhood." The introduction of some recent physiological and biochemical investigations would have done much to enhance these chapters. When reference is made to the physiology of the nervous system it is surprising how definite the information is about the function of the basal ganglia and their influence on personality disorders. It is with these chapters that the critic finds himself in disagreement with the author, and it is unfortunate that besides many valuable chapters several are given over to a simplification of neurophysiology rather than to an introduction to the elements of physiology.
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THE ADRENAL CORTEX AND INTERSEXUALITY

L. R. Broster et alia

(Chapman and Hall, London. 1938. 15s.)

240 pages are given to a study of this subject. The most valuable part of the book is that given to a short description of many cases. A few more details would have enhanced the value of some of the reports. There follows a series of studies of the psychological disturbances found in such cases. Included is a psychological study of homosexuals without glandular disturbance, of eunochoids, and of an eunuch. Though good, the interpolation of this material is confusing, for the title of the book indicates that the authors intend to deal with dysfunction of the adrenals. The pathological study which follows would have been made much more valuable by the inclusion of some photographs of histological material. This could have been accomplished without additional expense, as the clinical photographs in the earlier chapter are excessive in number, many being quite redundant. The biochemical studies are of interest and will stimulate further work. The book suffers from too much repetition and the inclusion of material not necessarily associated with dysfunction of the adrenals.