deficiency of wisdom” is made. In our view this cannot be interpreted as other than a defect of mind, which must we maintain be based on cortical misendowment or imperfection of evolution.

With numerous practical questions of education, training, treatment, with those of a sociological and legal nature, this new edition deals in extenso, providing therefore a kind of encyclopædia of mental deficiency of outstanding serviceableness.

S. A. K. W.

Sleep and the Treatment of its Disorders. By R. D. Gillespie, M.D., Physician and Lecturer in Psychological Medicine, Guy’s Hospital, etc. London: Bailliére Tindall & Cox. 1929. Pp. 267. Price 7s. 6d. net.

Dr. R. D. Gillespie has written a fine little volume on sleep and its manifold problems, which we cordially commend to the busy practitioner and to the expert in nervous or mental disease as well. For here, couched in a pleasantly readable style, will be found a more or less complete exposé of present-day knowledge in respect of the physiology of sleep mechanisms, the pharmacology and mode of action of sedative medicaments, and a highly practical description of how and when to treat any given variety of insomnia. Dr. Gillespie is conversant with the numerous theories of sleep that have at one time or another gained favour, and is sound in his criticism and adequate in his reasons for selection from among them of those on which some reliance may be placed. It is eminently satisfactory to note his conclusion that “the evidence points to the basal grey matter as being a waking-centre and not a sleep-centre,” seeing that endless confusion has arisen from the failure of many writers to observe the simple rule that destructive lesions destroy function; if a patient sleeps all the deeper because of destruction of his regio hypothalamica by a neoplasm that area cannot be regarded as constituting a sleep-producing centre, but precisely the reverse.

The reader cannot fail to be impressed by the combination of scientific erudition and skill in a complicated art revealed in these pages, though he may gently remonstrate with their author for providing only a selection, in the bibliographical tables, of the abundant references scattered through the text.


The term allästhesia is as far as the tactile field is concerned synonymous with allochiria and signifies reference of the local signs of cutaneous stimulation to the opposite side of the body from that to which in reality they belong. This tactile allästhesia is known occasionally in tabes, Brown-Séquard lesions, and other spinal and root affections, and has been described also in some cerebral cases. By optic allästhesia the authors mean the somewhat more
rare condition in which seen objects are misplaced in the visual field, being referred to a site different from their actual one (right instead of left, above instead of below, etc.). Apparently the first recorded instance of this anomaly is that of Beyer (1895), who suffered himself from migraine and who made the curious observation that during the occurrence of the migrainous visual phenomena objects situated in reality in the left peripheral visual field seemed to have their locus on the right, and higher up. Subsequent allusions in a sparse literature are summarised by the authors, who then furnish a long analysis of several personal cases of the same class, forming indeed in one or two instances an illustration of mirage effects—a "fata morgana of the visual field," as it has been termed.

As a result of their investigations, which have been conducted in a careful and elaborate fashion, the authors conclude that two factors contribute to the development of this visual allaesthesia, viz., (1) a disorder interfering in part or in whole with the functions of central vision, and (2) a release or escape of function of certain components out of the total influence exercised by the occipital convexity on the area striata. Thus in one case exhibiting loss of central vision, preservation of the peripheral field, and a confusion of left with right in visual space, two lesions were discovered, one (an old one) implicating the left occipital pole, and the other (recent and progressive) starting from the right occipital convexity and spreading towards the calcarine region. This monograph raises many questions of a difficult and rather technical kind which are nevertheless of much interest to the scientific neurologist, and merits reading in extenso by all to whom the subject appeals.

S. A. K. W.


The occurrence of spontaneous hæmorrhagic effusions in various nervous affections, organic or otherwise, deserves close attention. In respect of hysteria and allied psychoneurotic conditions a wave of scepticism seems to have succeeded the supposedly somewhat uncritical acceptance of the genuineness of the phenomena by older writers, and the present-day attitude is rather one which attributes them to artefact. The inaccuracy and unjustifyability of this way of considering them are strongly animadverted on by Dr. Schindler, who believes such spontaneous bleeding to be much more common than is usually thought, and cites various personal cases (both male and female) proving the contrary. Some of these, indeed, are distinctly impressive, as are also his selected quotations from the large literature on the subject. He provides the reader with an interesting excursus on the question of hysterical stigmata mimicking the wounds of the Christus.
Reviews and Notices of Books

S. A. K. W.

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