for suicide in the latter stage: the self-punishment corresponds to the death-instinct (Thanatos) and the id to the life-instinct (Eros) of Freud. There is an interesting discussion of the extroverting socializing influence of 'Eros' and the introverting individualizing influence of 'Thanatos.' Altogether this is a brief, clear and commendable exposition, and all serious students of the neuroses ought to study it with care.

R. G. G.

**Reflex Action ; a Study in the History of Physiological Psychology.**


Professor Fearing has laid the neurologist and psychologist under a debt of gratitude for his minute historical survey of the vici situdes undergone by the conception of reflex action. Any close reader of the scientific literature of the day in these two subjects must be impressed by the looseness of thought characterising use of the term in many instances, and by its extension to cover all kinds of movement. With a view to providing a thoroughly reasoned basis the author takes us seriatim from Descartes and Vesalius right down to the present, to the day of Pavlov and Sherrington. He cannot give a simple and unqualified definition, but allows a threefold classification. (1) Reflex action is involuntary, unlearned, predictable, invariable, purposive, and does not involve the cerebral cortex neurally. This is the 'specific' concept. (2) The 'genetic' concept declares it is derived from voluntary action through the intermediary of impulsive and automatic action. (3) According to the 'mechanical' concept all behaviour is predetermined by reflex neural arrangements. 'Choice' and 'purpose' disappear as factors. Terminological difficulties are ever in evidence in connexion with this analysis, and, be it once more stressed, artificialities. Division of arts into volitional, automatic, habitual, reflex, etc., makes an 'artificial stratification of animal responses.'

**Nouveau Traité de Psychologie.** Edited by **Georges Dumas, Professor at the Sorbonne.** Paris: Felix Alcan. 1930. Pp. 430. Price 75 fr.

The first volume of a new system of psychology, to be completed in ten, has made its appearance. Edited by Professor Dumas of the Sorbonne, with the assistance of a large number of distinguished collaborators, it promises well if we are to judge by this first instalment, which is concerned mainly with prolegomena. Successive chapters deal with the place of man in the animal series, with anthropology, with the physiology of age and sex, the general and special aspects of neurophysiology, consciousness from a biological viewpoint. After these introductory matters the subject proper begins with a discussion of the objects and methods of psychology.

There is much of interest to the philosophical neurologist and to the psychiatrist in these pages: the summaries of present-day knowledge as regards the functions of the nervous system and the relation of
'psychism' to various neural levels are clear and informative, while the chapter on consciousness is particularly illuminating. The general tenor of the more specific psychological chapters in this first volume finds expression in the initial sentence of the editor's introduction: "Une conception commune à tous les collaborateurs de ce Traité... consiste à considérer la psychologie comme uniquement fondée sur des faits et à exclure, par la même, de son domaine, toutes les speculations ontologiques."


The main thesis of this 'provocative' if not provoking book, caustically critical of much that passes for biological doctrine to-day, is that recent progress and acquisitions in the realm of physics (more particularly) should be applied to biological thought. Explanations that do not explain, antitheses that mutually exclude, teleological notions utilised in biology, rival theories of development, all come under the survey of the author, who does not spare the rod when considered salutary, and who certainly possesses a penchant for seeking out the flaws in the armour of the combatants in the field. His book is as a fact highly informative, mentally stimulating, and particularly useful in its succinct exposés of current hypotheses and views. What is largely novel and personal are his efforts to apply to his own subject various present-day discoveries from other domains of thought and research. For example, he tilts at the anatomist for studying (in what is usually believed to be a concrete science) what are really a series of abstracta. The 'heart' of the anatomist is a 'spatial' heart, 'much more abstract than the heart as it is in the living body.' The 'visual' heart in reality is itself an abstractum, 'a synthesis of many visual appearances of the heart as it appears after pickling.' What the author endeavours to convey to his reader is, that 'the heart is an event.' To those who can accept the contention in the statement that 'anatomy is and must be very abstract' this line of thought will doubtless appear enlightening, and they may perhaps be willing to follow the writer in his further argument, that the concrete organism is a spatio-temporal structure, and that this structure is the activity of the organism. With other words, in nature no antithesis between structure and function exists.


Any light that can be thrown on the secret of dementia praecox must be welcome. Dr. Businger approaches his subject by sketching in a few paragraphs the fundamental importance of respiration in the bodily economy and metabolism. Parallelism of the respiratory current is a physiological necessity for proper aeration and oxygenation. He then states that he has examined
some 500 cases of mental disease (mainly dementia praecox), and among them has found in a high percentage definite respiratory insufficiency, due usually to defective air-entry. He says that the average respiration rate per minute of cases of that psychosis is 18—21, whereas that of normal subjects is 16—19. To this impairment, and all that it must entail by way of retarded and inadequate metabolism, Dr. Businger ascribes many of the symptoms of the affection, though at this point we think his interpretations occasionally become a little strained, as when he asserts that the catatonia of the dement is adopted to counteract the effects of respiratory fault. On many cases he has operated, dealing with the nasal passages so as to procure better aeration, and he claims immediate improvement of a semiological kind.

There may be something in all this, possibly much. At any rate the slender monograph is evidently based on personal experience, is well documented, and written without any trace of overstatement. It merits consideration.


In an ingenious and readable fashion the author examines what is known of the affective side of mental life. The 'feelings' are regarded by some as akin to sensations, by others as a different order of mental facts, arising in the course of conative activity. Here the view is adopted that pleasure and pain, or unpleasure, are dependent on the success or otherwise of conation; the whole mental life of man is held to consist of a 'striving process,' included in which is adequate function of the instincts. With their activity feelings are coupled. According to the author the chief conscious instincts can be shewn to be derivatives of the primitive urge to 'self-maintenance.'

From the standpoint of pure psychology the argument is cleverly elaborated; nevertheless there is a considerable disadvantage in his not endeavouring to correlate neurological and, for that matter, psychopathological disorders affecting the sphere of the feelings with what is deduced largely by introspection. Little cognisance is taken of the data supplied by these studies favouring the view that feeling is connected with the activity of certain definite cerebral mechanisms.


A noteworthy addition to psycho-analytical literature is formed by Dr. Money-Kyrle's thesis on sacrifice and its meaning, which is conceived along historical lines in general, and the subject examined in the light of accepted psycho-analytical doctrine. The relation of sacrifice to parricide, expounded to some extent by Freud, is not considered by the author of necessity to entail
acceptance of the theory of a 'racial mind' or of the 'inheritance of acquired memory'; and he develops with logical minuteness his own view, that it is the 'symbolic expression of an unconscious desire for parricide which each individual has himself acquired.' The OEdipus complex is capable of a number of variations, in accordance with different impulses at different levels of the mind. Thoughtful in conception and clear in exposition, the book deserves careful study.


To the average English neurologist it will come rather as a surprise, we believe, to learn the extent to which the application of X-ray treatment in nervous disease has been advanced in the Viennese school, and elsewhere too, for that matter. If we are to judge by the data herein provided, there would appear to be practically no variety of nervous affection, peripheral or central, acute or chronic, in which radiation has not been given a trial. Naturally, its use has been recognised mainly in connexion with neoplasms, whereas the authors furnish details of its employment in conditions as widely separated as tabes and epilepsy, hydrocephalus and torticollis. If its adoption for some conditions has been purely empirical, for others perhaps more rational, in all it has been experimental; and the value therefore of the record is considerable even in its negative aspect.


That a second edition of this book should be required within a comparatively short period is indicative of its practical usefulness and relative completeness. Such changes as the new edition carries refer chiefly to blood-vessel tumours of the brain, varieties of encephalitis, the serum treatment of acute poliomyelitis and the malarial treatment of general paralysis. Ketogenic diet-sheets are also included. Clearly written and well considered, the material herein embodied is exactly that about which the keen practitioner will seek information, and to him the volume is once more recommended.


Written for the student and practitioner, in clear, concise, and graphic language, this little handbook of psychiatry is excellently done. It forms a collection of symptoms and syndromes as encountered at the bedside, and
says little of classification, of nosology, of disease-entities. Etiology and pathology, however, receive a share of attention, and treatment too. The semiological arrangement of the book is obviously based on firsthand clinical observation of an attractive kind, while the illustrations in collotype are unusually adequate; there is also (rare in French publications) an alphabetical index to facilitate reference. With this at hand, as an introduction to more ambitious textbooks, the student of psychiatry is well provided for.


For his first contact with mental disease this slender volume is offered the medical student. It embodies present-day views concerning the psychoses and, unhampered by controversial questions and terminological discussions, is content to furnish him with a précis of clinical psychiatry. Within its obvious limits it seems sufficient, but some of the illustrative figures (e.g. fig. 27) cannot be considered serviceable.

**The Influence of Habit on the Faculty of Thinking.** By MAINE DE BIRAN. Translated by M. D. BOEHM. With an introduction by GEORGE BOAS, London; Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1930. Pp. 227. Price 22s. 6d.

This is the third volume to appear in the series of reprints and translations forming the 'Psychology Classics' edited by Professor Knight Dunlap. In French psychology the work of Maine de Biran, published more than a century ago, has always been held in high esteem for his pioneer study of habit as a psychological rather than a physiological function, and also as the starting-point of that French spiritualism which culminated in the philosophy of Bergson. For these among other reasons this translation of his work will prove of interest to the student of psychological movements.


In this little book the author has reviewed in readable form the various problems about which the doctor is asked by his male patients. Impotence, homosexuality, masturbation, emissions, sterility and other subjects are dealt with shortly but informatively. A just balance is kept between physical and psychical factors both in etiology and treatment. The psychoanalysts will no doubt be dissatisfied that he does not consider their method the only treatment for psychical impotence, and in many respects the enquirer will desire fuller information than can be given within the compass of such a small volume. As an introduction to the subject, however, this book can be thoroughly recommended.

R. G. G.
Reviews and Notices of Books

R. G. G.

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