Reviews and Notices of Books


No one is better qualified than Dr. Norwood East to discuss with sympathy and sense a variety of problems bearing on the treatment of legal offenders and the relation of their misdemeanour or crime to their particular personalities. Constantly occupied with a special branch of his profession, he feels that a time has come when accumulated facts and impressions gleaned by him over a long period of years may usefully be shared with others, the outcome being this very readable and often deeply engrossing book. Its constituent chapters are mostly reproduced and amplified from individual communications, lectures, and addresses delivered at one time or another before varying audiences. About one quarter of the work is devoted to questions of prison administration; elsewhere 1,000 cases of attempted suicide are analysed; inter alia, the bearing of mental deficiency, drug addiction, and other abnormal mental states on crime is discussed dispassionately and ably. One of the most interesting chapters deals with murder from the point of view of the psychiatrist. Analysing 285 cases of murder, Dr. Norwood East found that only 35 of the murderers were insane or mentally defective, i.e. about one-seventh; and he quietly explodes a number of popular fallacies, such as that if a homicide confesses, or surrenders himself to the police, he is ipso facto insane, or that multiplicity of wounds has the same significance. He is no friend of the view that no murderer can be considered normal, that all such crime indicates insane impulse, that he who commits it needs treatment and not adjudication. Brushing away psychological speculations sometimes introduced to exculpate the accused, he concludes in words worth citing: 'the very existence of civilized society is endangered if crime is uncontrolled, and although the law in this country in regard to criminal responsibility is illogical, justice is done, and the manner in which it is done compels the admiration of the world.'


The work represented in this comprehensive study of the carotid sinus—anatomical, experimental, and clinical—was carried out at the Harvard
Medical School during 1932 and 1933. It is a monumental contribution to a subject the importance of which has not yet perhaps been fully appreciated.

In every one of 61 animals representing 27 different mammalian species the carotid body was found, always localized on the internal carotid when that vessel occurs, just at the bifurcation of the common carotid. Abundantly supplied by twigs from ninth, tenth, and occasionally twelfth cranial nerves, as well as from the sympathetic, the first of these has most significance in relation to the sinus. From it vasomotor reflexes can be elicited by stimulation, and alterations in the bloodflow through pial arteries can be seen (by the 'window' technique). These changes usually run parallel to the blood pressure, and this fact seems to indicate a passive relationship between systemic circulation and cerebral vascular system. The function of the sinus seems to be to guarantee continuity of the bloodflow to the brain; it may also play a part in the response of the cerebral vessels to stimulations of vagus and sympathetic.

Clinically, irritation of the sinus is sometimes associated with syncopal attacks, which may be a feature of tumours of the carotid body. On the other hand, there is considerable doubt whether the mechanism takes any part in the discharges of epilepsy and none that surgical intervention on the sinus in such cases is unwarranted. Notice is taken of the connexion between changes in blood pressure in cerebral tumour cases and the relation of the site of the lesions to such change; the occurrence of lowered pressure apparently depends on disturbance of some system in hypophysis and hypothalamus; raised pressure seems connected with bulbar ischaemia.


The sixth series of Professor Georges Guillain's Études, composed of some 36 papers, once more testifies to the indefatigable industry and fine neurological insight of their distinguished author. He has set himself a high standard, and his contributions will stand comparison with any of those of former Maîtres in the Parisian school. Whatever subject Professor Guillain takes up he illuminates. A fascinating little study describes the occurrence of pressure on the external popliteal by the patient's (a sculptor's model) sitting immobile for hours at some 20 séances with right leg folded over left at knee, the nerve being pinched between peroneus and tendon of biceps cruris. A similar case occurred in a man who served in a bootshop and who, when fitting shoes for his customers, overflexed his left leg at the knee as he crouched on his toes, the customer's leg and foot resting on his left thigh. Many articles are devoted to cerebral and spinal tumour cases; but the topics range in catholic manner over all the nervous system. The volume will prove a welcome addition to every neurological library.

The compilation of a dictionary of 'technical terms met with in psychological literature or which the psychologist may wish to use in his writings' is a tremendous task. A long list of expert collaborators (we count over 110 therein) supplies a hint of its laboriousness and at the same time must beget confidence in the general accuracy of the result. In an appendix are placed tables relating to colour-vision tests, experimental errors, logical fallacies, statistical formulae, and a dozen more topics of divergent kinds. There is a synoptic topography of the human central nervous system, and a catalogue of human reflexes 'frequently treated in psychological literature.' Prefixes and suffixes 'commonly used in scientific terms' are tabulated, and glossaries of French and German terms furnished.

Designed of course as a work of reference, the student can dip into it and is not likely to be disappointed in his search for any word, definition, or term that he comes across in his reading and for which he seeks a meaning or explanation. Opening it at random, we note that the first definition of 'neurosis' is: 'a functional disorder of the nervous system for which no actual lesion is found,' and at this interpretation possibly none will cavil; but an addition in brackets goes on to say: 'Current psychiatric usage tends to confine the term to psychogenic disorders, and to employ psychosis for disorders in which some chemical or physical cause is discoverable.' This statement we consider misleading. It is pleasing to note that 'drive' is preferred to 'urge,' which is defined as a 'strong tendency to perform an act'; the definition of 'epileptiform' is not that given by Hughlings Jackson, and is calculated to confuse, inasmuch as an 'epileptiform attack' is alleged to be due to 'some specific cause'—the implication being that an 'epileptic attack' is not. It is curious that 'aichmophobia' is not cited among the 'most common types of phobia.'

Taken as a whole, the dictionary is likely to prove helpful to all who consult it.


In the worship of the Phrygian god Attis, emasculation was a customary ritual by the priests and such sacrificial rites became widespread in the ancient world, demonstrating the early repudiation of sex through religious influences. The thesis of this book is that mankind remains now dominated by similar irrational fears, sacrificing posterity thereby in the form of a falling birth-rate. Economic pressure as a causative factor is denied, the procedure being rooted
in 'man's primitive terror of the civilization he has created.' A reproductive instinct is regarded as a fallacy, for had there been one the 'disastrous' fall of birth-rate could not have come about.

At some length religious influences are discussed. Though Christianity always preached ascetic idealism, it is thought that this was a product rather than a cause of sex inhibition and the conception of sex as inherently sinful is regarded as a man-made doctrine. This fear of sex in later centuries is dealt with, the allegation being that the Church has 'endeavoured to make universal a code of sex morals based in the last analysis upon nothing but fear.'

Many chapters are devoted to the various psychological factors of sex in its developmental stages and its relations to the origin of guilt, the conceptions of the father and the teaching of religion. Finally, Dr. Brend points out constructively that if the birth-rate is to be raised and the British race to continue, drastic measures will be needed. In the main it will mean the revision of the whole attitude towards sex enlightenment and freedom in the place of superstition and fear. The rights and responsibilities of youth must be recognized, parents and teachers must be alive to rational and scientific psychic training, hindrances to the development of a healthy sex life should be removed, freer intercourse between the sexes allowed, and greater freedom of marriage and divorce brought about.

There is, as a matter of course, much that is revolutionary in these pages, but throughout they make stimulating reading. The subject matter is of widespread interest both from a sociological and psychological point of view and the author is eloquent in his treatment of it. The reader will find his mental horizon widened through its study.


This serviceable little book, which in a compact way embraces all the different subjects of study needed for mental nursing training, appears now in a second edition with many additions, alterations, and improvements. The general plan of the well-known *Handbook for Mental Nurses* is followed. The author draws attention to the fact that a somewhat unusual style has been adopted, in that nearly every separate sentence expresses a fact that the nurse should know. For the purpose of reviewing all that has to be learnt for her examinations, the nurse should find these pages of great utility.


What was originally a small volume in this third edition been considerably enlarged and now constitutes something much more than mere hints
to probationer nurses. Purposely, the subjects of anatomy, physiology, first aid, hygiene, and sick nursing are not treated, attention being in the main given to mental nursing, normal and morbid psychology, and the various mental disorders. These are all dealt with in such a way as to create interest and understanding in a youthful nurse—a by no means easy task. The knowledge here given her will go far in helping her to carry on her duties intelligently.

Of especial value—and possibly not found in any other mental nursing work—is the information given on the malarial treatment of general paralysis of the insane and the special nursing that such patients need. It is also highly commendable that what nurses should know concerning mental hospital admissions and discharges is briefly added in a final chapter. In an appendix a selective list of books is given for those who may desire to further their knowledge and gain greater insight into all that appertains to their calling.

Though the contents are not free from errors—e.g. 'sublimation' has been wrongly defined—Dr. Eager has succeeded in producing a useful little book which merits a wide circulation.