Reviews and Notices of Books


The aim of the writer of this book has been to present to his readers, chiefly perhaps to students and members of the profession, an account of the nature and causes of personality disorders. What might be termed the anatomy and physiology of personality are first discussed; that is to say, its relation to constitution is examined, and the effects on its working of heredity and environment. Therefore the author is concerned with the debatable ground, the no-man’s-land (or should we say every-man’s-land?) of the marches between the physiological and the psychological. Mental mechanisms, current methods of examination and some clinical syndromes are discussed in a later section. In his studies the author has sought to follow objective lines, is temperate in his conclusions, and has produced a volume which will not alienate the neurologist by its neglect of the nervous system or disappoint the psychopathologist by under-emphasis of the side of the subject that appeals to him.


As stated in their preface, the intention of the joint authors of this ‘Introduction’ has been to give the student ‘some picture of the structure and function of the normal mind, the nature of psychopathological processes, and the form taken by clinical entities which can be recognized and classified as the various forms of mental illness.’ They feel that in his medical curriculum the student should proceed from neurophysiology to psychology ‘logically,’ then to psychopathology, and finally to the clinical side of the psycho-neuroses, psychoses, and mental deficiency. Such a scheme is sound and desirable; it would remove reproaches and at the same time put the whole subject of mental illness in its real setting among the other subjects of clinical medicine, not divorce it as at present, or ‘damn’ it by faint interest.

Having this end in view, the writers have done well in their task by arranging the book on corresponding lines, although they begin, naturally enough perhaps, where neurophysiology leaves off, without handling much of the latter. Numerous clinical illustrations are provided in the pages of a
readable work, which shows less signs of being a compilation by different authors than most books of the character. The interpretation of not a few of the clinical cases here quoted leans strongly to the psychopathological side; for instance, occupation neuroses are regarded as significant of 'discontent' and as providing 'means of escape,' and the like; but it would not be difficult to show that some of their phenomena cannot be explained by such conventional views.


A volume of well over a thousand pages, covering every aspect of psychiatry, represents a task of considerable magnitude, the accomplishing of which is matter for congratulation. Dr. Sadler's volume is framed on more or less conventional lines, being perhaps all the better for that; its setting out is logical and its consecutive arrangement suitable for purposes of reference. A very large number of clinical cases, sometimes described in rather a profuse manner, swell the dimensions of the book to no little extent. Particular attention is given to 'the neuroses' (about 250 pages), but here the classification adopted leaves much to be desired. They are subdivided into (a) psychasthenic states, (b) neurasthenic states, (c) the hysterias, and (d) allied functional nervous disorders. The last of these is a kind of caput mortuum, which comprises 'vasomotor ataxias,' 'motor ataxias,' 'sympathetic irritability,' 'migraine,' and 'constitutional psychoneurotic inferiority.' Such a scheme will hardly satisfy the critical and is open to several objections. Under 'motor ataxia' are included 'tremors, and convulsive movements,' the relation of which to neurosis sensu strictiori is nebulous. In this last division (d) case-reports again fill the pages, but of inferences and syntheses therefrom little indeed appears. The conception of vagotonia and sympathicotonia, briefly discussed but illustrated by still more clinical cases, has probably been over-simplified and stands in need of revision.

With judicious pruning this book might be lightened at once of some of both its physical and its mental heaviness.


The new fourth edition of the textbook of nervous diseases written by the late Professor A. Van Gehuchten, as revised and amplified by his son, shows considerable improvement on its predecessor (1926). Composed in an easy 'lecturing' style and well arranged, the material is divided into the two categories of 'organic' and 'functional.' Good descriptions, well illustrated,
are provided of the 'organic' diseases of the nervous system, and extend over 600 pages; to 'functional' conditions are allotted no more than 50. We do not know that there is much to cavil at in this considerable disproportion; many descriptions of neurotic states furnished by contemporaries would gain in point if they were brief, and less encumbered with verbiage. For its purpose, that of a textbook for students in neurology, the volume is excellently suited, and in this new edition sure to be appreciated. A number of the illustrations lack explanatory legends below them—an omission that might be corrected with advantage.


Dr. Stanley Cobb's slender book deals in a simple, clear, and yet erudite fashion with a variety of topics that concern the student of the nervous system. Subjects with which his name is associated here find, naturally enough, a prominent place; for instance, the cerebral circulation, the peripheral nerves and neuritis, motor integration and locomotion. These are among the longest chapters, whereas but a few pages are given to each of some others—for example, cerebrospinal fluid, paths of infection to the nervous system. The truth is, we think, that the book will be most enjoyed by those who are already familiar with its subject-matter, for it is rather discursive for the mere beginner and not ' ingoing ' enough for such as seek to pursue any one of its themes. In other words, it is less a ' Preface ' than a selection by a richly stored mind of neuropsychiatric questions and problems on which there is much to be said by so competent a writer. The book can be picked up and perused at random with interest and profit.


The late Dr. Theodore Weisenburg, whose loss all neurologists deplore, spent the last years of his life in pursuing with enthusiasm and concentrated attention the large and difficult subject of aphasia, of which he was known to have long been a student. His labours are enshrined in this packed volume, which easily holds its own with some well-known monographs that have preceded it. Rather less than one-third of the work is taken up with case-reports and methods of investigation, the remainder being devoted to aspects of the problem that concern neurologist and psychologist alike. Broadly conceived, the lines here followed lead to the conclusion that the chief clinical types are the 'predominantly' expressive, receptive, expressive-receptive and amnesic
varieties; that apraxia and agnosia, while closely related phenomena, do not appear as such (definitions are provided to explain the authors’ use of the terms) in the ‘clear-cut cases of aphasia’ here discussed; and that ‘pure’ forms of limited extent, or cases exemplifying ‘the subordinate classes such as the transcortical aphasias or conduction aphasia,’ have not been encountered in the authors’ series of 60.

It would be impossible in a short review to enter into various criticisms that suggest themselves, and we are content to recommend the monograph cordially to all those who find in its subject-matter a question of unceasing interest.


This is a finely conceived and executed work. Aware of numerous contradictions, of theories as much accepted as denied, of data reliable and unreliable, of conclusions tenable and untenable, that crowd the literature of the cerebrospinal fluid and its relation to the blood, Dr. Katzenelbogen undertook to approach the whole question de novo and to determine for himself, so far as possible, what is established and will remain, as well as what is not. Accordingly, he presents his readers with a complete mise-au-point of his subject. His book is neither a textbook of the fluid nor a laboratory guide, but rather a work of reference in which the knowledge of to-day is sifted, weighed, and judged, in each of its aspects; thus three chapters describe the fluid as such, its formation and circulation, and several more are concerned with its physicochemical composition. Full attention is engaged with problems of the ‘barrier’ between blood and fluid and its permeability. Every chapter closes with a summary.

It is a welcome addition to the literature of the cerebrospinal fluid and has qualities that make it indispensable to all workers in the field and all who require to familiarize themselves with what has been determined in regard to the fluid and its bearing on clinical neurology. The bibliography covers over 40 pages.


Dr. Cossa’s compendium of nervous physiology and physiopathology covers more than its title indicates and is calculated to appeal to the clinician who is not content with mere observation, but wishes to understand the meaning of symptoms and signs. It is remarkably comprehensive, and somewhat of a novelty, we imagine, for the French school. French neurologists have been
reproached with following the clinicoanatomical method to its sterile end; aware of this, a pregnant phrase from Dr. Clovis Vincent's preface shows how he regards the matter: 'Si l'anatomie et la clinique sont à la base de la pratique, la physiologie est à la base du progrès.' Here then is offered to the student a nervous semiology in which the underlying physiology of symptoms and signs is explained in clear language, aided by a wealth of diagrams, the great majority of which appear to be original. The more we have examined it the more convinced we are of the excellence of the production, whose value is enhanced by that rarity among French books—an index.


There are not too many compact and well-planned textbooks of neuropathology on the market to-day for this new arrival to fail to find a place. A general account of the processes and reactions of disease in neural tissues is followed by a description of a number of nervous affections from the standpoint of their pathology. So far as these descriptions take the reader they are succinct and accurate, controversial matters being eschewed and only essentials examined. Doubtless, owing to its very qualities of brevity and condensation, the work leaves on the mind the impression of being rather unequal; there is much more variety and complexity in regard to 'birth injuries' than the two pages devoted to that topic convey; on the other hand, although the paragraphs on Huntington's chorea hardly occupy more than half a page they embody the thoroughly sound contention that since the morbid process is diffuse any attempt at clinicopathological correlation is 'difficult'—we might add 'precarious.'


The student of the nervous system has to-day to familiarize himself with much more in medicine than seemed to be the case at the beginning of the century, for advances in knowledge in spheres at first glance rather remote have thrown a flood of light on disease-conditions once supposed to be his preserve. This is true in particular of the vitaminoses, so-called; among them are numbered beriberi, pellagra and perhaps subacute combined degeneration—at least, several nervous conditions have definitely a vitamin side, so to say. Dr. Aykroyd's discussion of vitamins is fascinating, no less because of the intrinsic interest of the subject than owing to his animated and often amusing style, coupled with a facility in illustration that is to be envied. He
has written a book more entertaining than an armful of novels and yet pervaded with a sound scientific atmosphere of criticism and suspended judgment.


A complete revision of a previous edition (1920) has enabled Dr. Bram to incorporate in his book various increments to knowledge of a still mysterious disease that have accrued in the last decade or more. Its theme is centred on the belief, held with conviction, that exophthalmic goitre can be treated by medical, hygienic, and psychotherapeutic measures more successfully than in any other way. His argument is that the malady cannot possibly be thyrogenous alone, and that the surgeon acts as though he were dealing with a mere local thyroid disease. Operative treatment can therefore at most be purely palliative. We need not follow the argument farther, based as it is on the author’s experience of twenty years; everything that can be said and done from a non-surgical standpoint is here weighed, documented, and put forward as a practical contribution to treatment.
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