
The author in his preface claims that psychology has hitherto only been treated in its entirety in the text-book manner, and sets out his aim as the giving of "a reasonably complete survey of the whole field, treating the matter briefly indeed, but, it is hoped, so suggestively that the thought may be led beyond the compass of this small book". In pursuance of this aim he ranges over a wide field, including not only psychology in its narrower sense, but education, the psychoneuroses, insanity, the crowd, and the delinquent. Naturally these many subjects are treated superficially, and every chapter lends itself to criticism on the score both of its facts and its theories; but the broad aim of showing how a knowledge of psychological principles may illuminate all the activities of man is well sustained. To the professional psychologist, psychiatrist, or educationalist the book will not prove of great value; but it is very pleasantly written, and to the general reader it should be attractive, stimulating, and useful.


This volume contains a severe indictment of the asylum system in this country. The author bases his criticisms upon experience gained as a locum tenens medical officer in two large county asylums during the war. He apparently discovered no redeeming feature whatever in these institutions, and asylum life is depicted in the gloomiest colours. This is not the place to discuss at length the criticisms contained in this volume, but it may well be questioned if the account here given accurately describes the conditions under which the insane are treated in England. Writing as an asylum doctor of several years' experience and with an intimate knowledge of a number of public asylums, the reviewer finds himself quite unable to recognize the picture of asylum life as herein portrayed. There is much brightness, happiness, earnest endeavour, and devotion to duty in asylums, and the insane as a whole are treated with humanity, kindness, and consideration. The book is calculated to give the public an erroneous and even mischievous impression of the work which is being done on behalf of the insane, and it contains a number of unjust accusations as to the attitude of asylum nurses to their patients. Much remains to be done for the insane; but if the aspirations of those who are responsible for their care are to be realized, the public will have to adopt a much more generous policy to asylums in the future than they have done in the past. Unfortunately improvements need money if they are to be carried into effect. Asylums are no exception in this respect, and the whole question is ultimately an economic one.

H. Devine.