Reviews and Notices of Books.


We have within these very instructive pages a highly successful attempt to formulate a wide viewpoint of psychiatrical principles from their biological, psychobiological, and sociological aspects. Mental phenomena are interpreted and correlated with the principles of science which have been worked out in other fields. The keynote of the author's thesis is that "disease is only a manifestation of that dynamic interplay between organism and environment when, for the time being at least, the balance is on the wrong side of the ledger." The separatist view of mind has for long hampered our progress in our conception of mental disease, and the unity of the organism is insisted upon as a necessary approach to the subject. From the biological point of view White shows how integration has taken place at every evolutionary level, and how structure has arisen through organized function, tending to ever-increasing individuation of the organism. The facts, however, at any level of integration need to be explained, and can only be fully explained in terms of that level. These principles are fundamental to an understanding of the psyche with its dynamic urge, and "psychiatry must interest itself with a longitudinal section of the individual which shows how a given type of personality make-up has reacted to a given type of stress." Conflict and ambivalency are universally seen, not only at the psychological level, but at all stages of development. The wish at the psychological level is taken as the unit of consciousness. In insanity it is the individual-society relation which is involved, and, as Sherrington has lately pointed out, psychology can never be explained in terms of neural processes.

White discusses the concepts of Janet, Freud, Jung, Adler, and Kempf, and endeavours to correlate their various viewpoints. Adler's and Kempf's work are both much appreciated, as they brought a needed emphasis to the organic side of the psychiatric problems; and Kempf's mechanistic and dynamic classification of the neuroses and psychoses is given as an illustration of the importance of focusing the attention upon the process rather than etiological factors or pathological lesions. Briefly, the broad principles involved in therapeutics are dealt with, and the concept of sublimation towards a higher social integration is touched upon. A pragmatic and teleological attitude is adopted throughout, and a neurosis or psychosis is regarded as "an expression of the blocking of the instinctive tendencies
of the individual because they cannot become assimilated to his conscious purposes, or the energy they contain be utilized in forward living activities."

We regard this monograph as an excellent and valuable presentation of a viewpoint which admirably sums up the principles upon which the study of psychiatry should be founded. Any student of mental medicine will do well to absorb its contents, so that he may recognize at an early stage the sterility of the merely descriptive aspect of his studies which has for so long hampered progress in this branch of medicine. The book, however, should be read by everyone whose interest lies in humanity's strivings. It constitutes a highly worthy successor to the author's previous contributions on such problems.

C. Stanford Read.


In an endeavour to discover if there was any correlation between certain endocrine disorders and special psychotic syndromes, twenty-two male patients in St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, were studied by the author and his assistants for six months. No selection was made on the basis of mental disorder, but the group had in common only some kind of imbalance of one or more of the ductless glands. Since the pathology of psychotic disorders is in so many directions obscure, work which will throw any light on the problem must be specially welcomed. The discoveries of the internal secretions of the body, and the part they play in the emotional spheres more especially, have led some observers to see herein the key to all mental deviations, and though there are excellent reasons for recognizing in the interplay of hormones a factor which must by no means be neglected, we must be on our guard not to mistake cause for effect or speculate wildly with knowledge which at present is scanty and doubtful in many of its applications. Intensive study as here undertaken can only be productive of good when so scientifically carried out, for, as Dr. Fay shows, up to the present little work on such lines has been attempted.

Certain observations made by Mott, Kojima, Rossi, Prior, and Laignel-Lavastine are quoted, and both Cushing and Jelliffe have pointed out that the psycho-analytic school should take cognizance of these endocrine factors in dealing with infantile complexes. In drawing any conclusions from the results of therapy, the three forms of treatment here more or less simultaneously undertaken have to be taken into account. Only in two cases can it be thought that occupational therapy lent any aid towards improvement or cure, but it is well shown that any mental improvement or regression is quickly mirrored in a patient's work, which therefore becomes a valuable indicator of his condition. With regard to glandular therapy, almost every case was stimulated, some having their trouble increased, but most receiving some benefit. There was a decided increase of interest in the environment in a few, and a forced extroversion was also noted. In
Foundations of Psychiatry

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