Reviews and Notices of Books.


No writer in this country has exerted more influence upon the development of psychology along dynamic lines than the distinguished author of this volume, and general satisfaction will be felt among psychologists that he has now given them a comprehensive and systematic presentation of his views in textbook form. In writing this book Professor McDougall has in view the needs of both the junior and the advanced student of psychology, and he has had printed in smaller type a number of passages in which he has discussed problems of peculiar difficulty or of secondary importance, recommending the beginner on first reading to omit these and also the footnotes. In his preface the author observes that the time has gone by when any one man could hope to write an adequate textbook of psychology, pointing out that the science has now so many branches, methods and fields of application that no single individual can hope to have the necessary familiarity with the whole. In this book, however, he aims to introduce the student to his science, giving him a profitable line of approach, a fruitful way of thinking of psychological problems and a terminology as little misleading as possible. The book has the advantages of being interesting, readable and clear, and may be recommended as an excellent introductory manual to psychology.

As this volume is a textbook the author devotes more attention to cognitive processes than was the case in his former studies; the general principles upon which his teaching is based do not differ to any notable extent, however, from those with which psychologists are already familiar from his previous monographic studies. Professor McDougall now defines psychology as the science of the human mind, and explains this change from his definition of psychology, first formulated in 1905, as the 'science of behaviour' as due, not to a change of viewpoint, but to the fact that the behaviourists have adopted his suggestion and carried it, as he feels, to an extreme. In some respects this change is to be regretted; it may be in some measure true, as the author says, that a definition is of minor importance, but in this particular case his previous definition has become intimately associated with his name, and it expresses or symbolizes, as it were, the essence of his teaching which, with its objective, dynamic and biological tendencies, has exerted a notable and beneficial influence upon the development of psychological thought. This change in definition—made as a protest against the theories and assumptions of the
American behaviourist school—is indicative of the underlying aim of the author in writing this volume. It is much more than a textbook; it is both a statement and a defence of the psychological position reached by the author after thirty years of strenuous study. It is unfortunate (especially for the beginner) that the psychopathologist should still be so much preoccupied with disputations, but it must inevitably be so as long as there is no agreement in regard to fundamental assumptions, categories or methods. Professor McDougall describes his book as largely a polemic against the mechanical psychologies which preponderate at the present time and on behalf of purposive psychology. Briefly, he advocates the hormic theory, or the view that all animal and human behaviour is purposive in however vague and lowly a degree, and that purposive action is fundamentally different from mechanical process. He takes a more decisive antideterministic attitude than in his former works, and his views, which are here maintained with much vigour, will, no doubt, provoke considerable discussion.

The author does not consider abnormal psychology in this volume, and he proposes to deal with this subject in another book. Psychopathologists will await with much interest the application of the principles outlined in this volume by Professor McDougall to the problems of abnormal mental life.

H. Devine.


Within these pages we have a medley of discourse about everyday fears, special fears, dreams, Coué, Freud, and the ductless glands. We cannot feel that ‘nervous’ patients would derive any adequate benefit from its perusal though they might glean some useful points. Not a few chapters contain inaccuracies and misleading statements. It is instructive to learn that “in a way, the Freudian psychologist has simply glorified and somewhat mysticized a bit of popular knowledge.” As one would here expect, the endocrine glands are familiarly dealt with as the “glands of courage, fear, health and personality.” Any neuritic sufferer would do well to seek more authoritative literature.

C. S. R.


We suppose every neuropathologist at one time or another evinces discontent with published works on his subject; he never finds exactly what he wants, but has no time to write a textbook for himself. Into some 140 pages Professor Rossi condenses neuropathology of a general sort, the physiopathology of the nervous system, and the pathology of the voluntary muscular system, and while the critical reader will find something to complain of, as