in turn the polymorphic theory, Mendelianism ("the future may show that Mendelian laws govern the inheritance of mental diseases—at the present time there is nothing to prove this"), and the ideas of the Biometric School. He prosecutes a suggestive line of thought in arguing that much of what are cited as racial predispositions are in fact environmental predispositions, and that environment is constantly bombarding germplasm. The conception of blastophoria (Forel)—the belief that "the texture of the germinal cells may be injured and this injury is inheritable"—evidently makes a large appeal to Dr. Myerson, and he supports the conception with various cogent considerations. Posterity may be altered and injured "for several generations" through environmental influences acting on the germplasm of an individual. He finally accepts blastophoria as a working hypothesis.

Altogether a stimulating and well-considered book.

S. A. K. W.

Selbstschilderungen der Verwirrtheit: die oneiroide Erlebnisform.

The type of medical literature consisting of autobiographical accounts of mental phenomena is not unknown in England; apart from the "confessions" of a genius like de Quincey, certain recent books of this kind have enjoyed a passing vogue. It would appear that in this respect German literature is more voluminous; in the monograph under review the author has collected a series of clinical documents of varying length and value in which patients have set forth, at a varying distance of time, their recollections of the mental experiences through which they passed as a sequel to disorder of a psychical sort. The interest of such a collection resides largely in the question whether self-observed symptoms will throw light on the psychopathology of the acute psychoses—from the nature of the case these must be largely if not entirely the type of disease of which subsequent autobiographical descriptions are possible. Dr. Mayer-Gross has done psychiatrists a good service in thus correlating and annotating some nine or ten cases belonging to this group.


This monograph consists of two parts; the first concerns hypnotic methods in man, by Dr. August Bostroem, of Munich, while the second deals with hypnosis in animals, by Dr. Ernst Mangold, of Berlin. The former contains a description of the usual varieties of technique, a chapter on the indications for the procedure, its clinical value, the clinical phenomena, difficulties and objections, and a discussion of individual "hypnotizability." A too brief analysis is made of the objective characters of the symptoms in the hypnotized
subject. The latter contribution is of considerable interest, and serves to place the study of hypnotism on a much more objective basis than is commonly found in textbooks. This part is well illustrated by photographs. The familiar phenomena of hypnosis, so-called, in the crayfish and other creatures are fully investigated; the “Totstellreflex” is carefully analyzed, and its connection with other clinical varieties of akinesis discussed. This is by far the most hopeful line of investigation in respect of hypnotism; if its examination is confined to the mental state of the hypnotized subject the place it really holds from a physiological standpoint is quite lost sight of. Further study in this respect is desirable.


Opium, tobacco, and alcohol form for Dr. Legrain a sort of cerberus-headed monster urgently requiring decapitation. Apostle of total abstinence, he will not hear of moderation, or even of use, as opposed to abuse. All is anathema. An interesting presentment of the subject-matter is not in our view sufficient to counterbalance the special pleading of which throughout he appears to us to be guilty. Incidentally, the large number of marks of exclamation scattered through these pages are not calculated to produce in the reader’s mind that dispassionate atmosphere for which problems of this kind really call.


This slim volume embodies a series of engaging essays in which the author, as it were, “thinks aloud” on topics ranging from the liberty of the subject to the advantages and defects of the English boarding school methods of education. In texture all comparatively slight, they are none the less readable and informative.


This work, written carefully and with a minimum of psychoanalytic terminology, ostensibly deals with the relationship of the sexes from the psychological standpoint. In fact, it may be fairly said that it rather deals with the psychological disabilities of women in a modern, overpopulated, industrial society. The author asserts that these disabilities are founded upon the dominance and the artificial privilege of the male. But it is arguable that economic and legal disabilities are the primary causes of the present unrest exemplified by ‘feminism’ (a movement which is, of course, propelled
equally by 'male interests' and 'female'). In any case, 'progress,' 'improvement,' and 'inferiority' are dangerous terms to employ in the discussion of the sexual relationship, where the components are, or, as far as we know, should be, complementary. Societies peopled by healthy and happy individuals have existed, and do exist, wherein the sex relationship may be said to depend upon the 'dominance' and 'privilege' of one or other sex. Economic fluctuations do demonstrably influence greatly the emotional reactions of individuals to 'dominance,' whether sexual or otherwise, and, whereas other forms of dominance may result in pathological repression, it is not established that sex dominance necessarily does so result. Also, "equality in difference" need not necessarily be, as the author suggests, a mere rationalization of the male desire for power; the test of its soundness may well be its acceptance or otherwise by women, and men.

The really intriguing part of this work will be found modestly confined to an appendix of eighteen pages. Herein is demonstrated the unconscious idea of male superiority in the writings of Freud. This analysis-at-a-distance is concise and, so far as it goes, convincing. But, if true, it requires careful elaboration. For, if true, it connotes, as the author points out, "a great tendency" (on the part of Freud) "to ignore the female and relegate her to a position of nothingness and obscurity." The patriarchal influence, if it "ignores the female," etc., must have led inevitably to assertions diametrically opposed to the conscious intentions of Freud and of his disciples. The definition of such a conflict in the mind of so great an authority is not merely interesting. Its bearing, if established, on the question of the validity of the Freudian hypothesis would be decisive.

A. BALDIE.


This volume is a compendium indeed, since it embraces chapters on such subjects as the anatomy and structure of the nervous system, its functions and histology, the internal secretions, emotions, instincts, psychoanalytic concepts, and mental diseases. It is evident that the author here endeavours to see the organism as an integrated whole, and he states in his preface that the biological conception of mind is the only sound one. We agree with him, but at the same time we have within these pages an intimate linking up of nervous structure and functions with mental processes which can hardly be satisfactorily defended. He shields himself somewhat by saying: "The study of mentation or the functioning of the brain cells from a scientific aspect . . . is still in its infancy, and many conclusions are drawn from what is purely hypothetical, but in this work, for the sake of clearness, many of these assumptions have been stated as if they were facts." We doubt whether this conduces to 'clearness.' Though he states that he has largely followed the teachings of William White, this authority especially warns us against the
Reviews and Notices of Books

A. Baldie

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