A Present-day Conception of Mental Disorder. By Charles Macfie Campbell, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard University. 1924. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. Pp. 54. Price 4s. 6d.

This is one of the volumes of the "Harvard Health Talks," and we cannot imagine a more instructive presentation of a somewhat difficult theme than is contained herein. The reading of this small book would not only be a valuable education to the layman, but would also benefit the large number of the medical profession whose conceptions of mental disorder require reconstruction. We are afraid that the price asked for so small a volume may hamper its sale. At a lower price it should be spread broadcast.

C. S. R.


The third volume of the Transactions of the Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Disease embodies the investigations and discussions on the difficult subject of heredity, dealt with by the Association at its annual congress in December, 1923. The editorial preface modestly limits the purpose of the volume to the endeavour to introduce a little maturity of vision and clarity of thought into the consideration of questions of heredity by neurologists and psychiatrists, and candidly admits that the Association has found it impossible to reach any conclusions of value; accordingly, no summary of results is given.

The essays comprised in this Report provide thoughtful and stimulating reading, but from their nature they are somewhat heterogeneous and some rather discursive. From the discussions of the question-and-answer type given at the end of some of the papers it is apparent that both contributor and questioner are, as it were, feeling their way through a maze of data the exact interrelation of which is often unclear; mere speculation, however, is eschewed by most of the contributors. Dr. Jelliffe's paper on the parts of the nervous system which tend to exhibit morbid recessive or dominant characters is of much interest, for here is an attempt to explain symptoms on physiological rather than anatomical lines. His line of argument would be fortified by reference to several of Hughlings Jackson's writings, but as far as the reviewer has noticed no allusion is made to these by Dr. Jelliffe. If one reads the volume critically one is soon aware of the fact that a great deal of our study of heredofamilial cases has never passed the stage of mere description; yet some of the contributors, at any rate, are alive to the genetic and prophylactic importance of the problems here set out. In spite of interesting essays written from a Mendelian standpoint no answer is as yet forthcoming to the question thus posed by Pierre Marie: "What gives the parents the sad privilege of procreating such children?"

The outstanding value of the book is that it does provide a mise-à-point from which further studies it is to be hoped will emanate.
Die Leberfunktionsprüfung; ihre Ergebnisse und ihre Methodik.

In view of the increased interest in liver function apropos of the interrelation of certain nervous diseases and certain visceral defects a brochure of this character is eminently useful. It contains a précis of many liver tests of proved clinical value; their rationale is explained and their relative importance estimated. The most recent research rather throws doubt on the value of the hemoclasic crisis test of Widal; Dr. Lepehne’s conclusion is to the effect that its reliability is not finally established. In all biochemical laboratories this little handbook deserves its place. A bibliography of some 340 references is provided.


Dr. Lévy-Valensi’s handbook of neurological diagnosis is conceived on practical and up-to-date lines, is written in a clear and readable fashion, and is illustrated with a fine series of simple and original diagrams, and with a number of clinical photographs. Some of the diagrams put the actions of neural mechanisms in a clearer light than any we remember having seen elsewhere. This is notably the case in respect of vestibular function and of the reflexes. Those illustrating brain-stem syndromes are also remarkably useful (some are derived from Dejerine’s Sémiologie).

The book is intended for the student and practitioner, as an auxiliary to more systematic treatises. Some eighty pages are devoted to methods of examination; the major portion of the volume is concerned with clinical syndromes and diseases and their differentiation, ranging from the muscles and peripheral nerves to cortical symptoms, and inclusive of the sympathetic system and the endocrine glands. Rarities are omitted, while adequate attention is given to common nervous conditions such as hemiplegia, tabes, neuralgia. Naturally, where the ground covered is considerable, inequalities of treatment will occur; we think the localization of cerebral tumours is worthy of more attention than is allotted it, for several well-recognized types are omitted (e.g., the uncinate syndrome); the sign of Argyll Robertson should be mentioned among the symptoms of mid-brain tumours; the diagnosis of frontal tumours should be amplified.

Taken as a whole, however, we have formed a favourable opinion of this practical and not unwieldy handbook, which contains abundant proof of the wide clinical experience of its author. It possesses a fault far too common in continental works of this kind, viz., the absence of an index.


The second annual issue of this useful and compendious medical almanack...
fulfils the promise of the first. Within its closely printed pages will be found an immense amount of practical information bearing on matters medical in their every aspect, and for purposes of reference it is indispensable.

Since its compiler invites critical co-operation, we may point out that under the heading 'Metropolitan Asylums Board' (p. 405), it is stated that "particulars of Mental Hospitals and Training Colonies are given on p. 406," on which page, however, no such particulars are to be found. A search through the volume fails to reveal any data as to the important Mental Defective Hospitals and Training Institutions of that Board, and we trust this omission will be rectified in subsequent editions. We note, too, the omission of Nervous and Mental Specialists in the lists of provincial consultants.
Reviews and Notices of Books

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