Reviews and Notices of Books


The subject of this monograph needs no introduction to the neurologist, for during the past decade or more it has constantly been under discussion. A book of this nature is welcome, because the authors have attempted to correlate their knowledge of the basal ganglia in a way which leads to clearness. In the first part they have deemed it wise to review the anatomy of the basal ganglia in a global manner. They have succeeded in bringing together the main facts of our knowledge in regard to the anatomy of these structures, and they terminate the chapter by an alphabetical index with definitions of the centres and fibre tracts concerned, together with a brief résumé of the general embryology of the region.

The second part comprises a topographical description of serial sections in three planes, vertico-frontal, horizontal and sagittal, the fibre tracts being illustrated by photographic reproductions, accompanying which are schematic diagrams for purposes of explanation, and the cellular structures by diagrams. This section is most valuable to the anatomist and pathologist. It requires careful study so that the third part will become comprehensible.

The third and final part of the anatomical description embraces a minute and careful representation of the fibre connections and cellular structures of the basal ganglia, which have been outlined in the previous chapters. The basal ganglia are comprehensively described in respect of their cellular structure and connections, comparative anatomy, embryology, myelogenesis and vascular supply. Although certain individualistic views and conceptions of the authors may not meet with entire acceptance, their work will still remain of paramount importance.

The authors have chosen for their task in part four to systematize the anatomo-pathological findings of paralysis agitans. In the introduction pathological distinctions are made between the pure form of paralysis agitans and the postencephalitic form. Having clearly defined their purpose, they describe the anatomo-pathological findings of the pure form of paralysis agitans as seen in the corpus striatum, substantia nigra and other less constantly affected areas. In their concluding remarks certain anatomo-pathological contentions are made, etiological factors are discussed, regional and systematic character is considered, and pathogenesis is debated. The authors distinguish three clinical varieties of paralysis agitans; the postencephalitic form, the pure form, and the presenile or senile form.

A very extensive bibliography and an alphabetical index conclude the book. All who are interested in the basal ganglia will do well to have this
book in their library as it contains much valuable and useful information which is clearly set out and accompanied by beautiful drawings and well diagrammed.

A. W. Y.


This small volume is according to the author "the result of an attempt to treat the tension aspect of tension and pain not as a symbolic expression, but as a fact, and one which has quite probably an important part to play in the theory of feeling, and perhaps of consciousness itself." He argues that the reproductive and self-preservative instincts are activities to relieve the tension which various stimuli bring about. Through the latter instinct painful stimuli are avoided and tension thus obviated. Pleasure generally appears from the neutralisation or discharge of tension and is proportional to this rate of change, while pain accrues from non-fulfilment of such changes. The relation of these feelings to tension is mathematically and diagrammatically expressed. The anticipation of tension relief gives us fore-pleasure and this consciously and unconsciously constitutes the interest of life. Conscious anticipation of tension in the imagination is fear. Masochism is regarded as a prolongation of fore-pleasure in which, though pain is apparently enjoyed, the pleasure is really taken in an unconscious anticipation of the relief of tension. Love and hate and the libido theory of Freud are discussed on this basis. The author states that he had surmised that there might be a 'death instinct' prior to reading Freud's speculations on the subject in his Beyond the Pleasure Principle. He also observes: "Freud's idea is that the organism welcomes stimuli in order to maintain itself in a state of rest, whereas mine is that it deliberately disturbs rest in order to obtain pleasure, although the attainment of pleasure, it is true, does bring it back into a state of rest." Much that the writer says has been to some extent formulated already by Freud, Kempf, and others. We cannot look upon lowly living matter as merely automatically reacting to certain stimuli. These reactions are purposeful and some psychoical element, however embryonic, must be postulated. There is much evidence of useful thought in the book and on a difficult theme. Those who need some brief insight into the subject will here find their needs supplied.

C. S. R.


The author, who has previously published many works on kindred subjects, deals with the marriage problem in a simple, rational, and instructive way. It is evident that he has read widely and has modern psychological knowledge, upon which he mostly founds his principles of the source of the pitfalls. Though these pages are only intended as a more or less superficial survey of an intricate and wide theme, they can be recommended as a useful exposition of the main factors involved.

C. S. R.
Les Noyaux Gris Centraux et la Région mésencéphalo-sousoptique

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