professional women and mothers; somehow their appeal is immediate, their touch is sure.


To the neurologist seeking the wider outlook, the larger air of the neuro-psychical sphere, nothing is more apt to irritate than a study of the enigmas of psychical and neural interaction which ignores the data of neurophysiology and of neuropathology. Far too many of such studies have emanated from authors who are patently not familiar with the facts of these sciences. They are convicted accordingly of the sin of amateur criticism. It is with peculiar pleasure that we welcome and recommend this "fascinating monograph," as the translators justly call it, from the veteran neuropathologist von Monakow. He, at any rate, has been so steeped in the lore of physiology and pathology that he is incapable of brushing aside the labours of generations of patient objective research. Here there is no inverting of the pyramid, as Hughlings Jackson would have said. On the basis of acquired objective facts Professor von Monakow ventures from the known to the unknown, and the reader will follow him sympathetically in his quest after the material side of the emotional life, of the elementary and the psychical emotions alike. He truly says that what is required to-day is a careful study, from the biological standpoint, of the primitive feelings and instincts, through their further evolution and development, right up to social feelings and morality. His contention is that the analysis of the world of sensation and perception, of feeling and instinct, can lead to no satisfactory goal without knowledge of the morphological basis of it all. When the question is naturally asked, how can a morphological point of view be brought to bear on the phenomena of the ego? the answer is, as daily experience teaches, that "every psychic process . . . presents certainly a physiological effect in the brain, whether we will or not."

So thoughtful and thought-evoking a contribution to a matter of perennial interest is worthy of a much longer review than we have space for, but its appeal is above all to those whose knowledge is erected on the fundamentals of neurology, and they will at once appreciate its grasp, its width, and its mellowness.

S. A. K. W.

**The Inheritance of Mental Diseases.** By Abraham Myerson, M.D., Professor of Neurology, Tufts College Medical School, Boston, etc., 1925. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Company; London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. Pp. 386. Price $5, or 25s. net.

This is a book to read and ponder over. Professor Myerson's attitude
towards current ideas and conceptions of heredity and of the bearing of the latter on the causation and development of mental disease (and nervous disease, too, for that matter) is one of healthy scepticism, and his analysis of clinical data supposed to illustrate the action of heredity is similarly coloured with well-informed criticism. The lines of argument are lucidly presented; the style is easy and fluent, and if on occasion the author is somewhat caustic in his criticism there is something of humour in his manner which is not out of place in dealing with a subject that has sometimes been provocative of views to be killed only by ridicule.

Briefly, Dr. Myerson draws fundamental distinctions between hereditary, constitutional, and congenital states or morbid conditions. He shows the valuelessness of the hackneyed conclusions as to inheritance of mental disease from the occurrence of nervous or mental symptoms in ancestors or collaterals; further, he selects diseases reputedly inherited and indicates how their appearance is capable of another interpretation. For example, he selects epilepsy as a supposedly hereditary disease, and proves by the experience of the Massachusetts State Hospital for Epileptics that the occurrence of the condition in brothers and sisters is relatively rare—much more so than in cases of feeble-mindedness, and even of so-called neurasthenia. His conclusion is to the effect that epilepsy is mainly an affair of the individual and not of the stock. Taking, again, the five important states of dementia praecox, manic-depressive insanity, paranoid psychoses, involution diseases, and senile dementia, the author reduces these, in a general way, to the paranoiac, the dementing, and the manic-depressive groups, and shows “these three types of mental disease may occur at any period of life, in youth, maturity, involution, or senium. Whatever is their cause, the less resistant individuals develop these conditions early, others more resistant hang out until the changes of the involution, and still more resistant individuals develop them late in life.” The major portion of the book is occupied with the application to these of hereditary principles, and, after a long analysis of the data of personally observed cases in respect of the transmission of these specific states, general conclusions are given on pages 222–223. Among these are that paranoid characters remain very persistent, and so do manic-depressive characters; when the mental state worsens in succeeding generations it tends usually in the direction of dementia praecox, yet in numerous instances a recovery trend is apparent in the descendants of the insane. Dr. Myerson emphasizes the actual rarity of a mingling of stocks whereby a mental disease persists unaltered for more than two generations.

Descent representing so-called “vertical” transmission, the author next tackles the question of “horizontal” transmission, i.e., what are the characters of the psychoses in insane siblings? Do they tend to be like or unlike? On the whole, they tend to be similar, at least in their main characters—a conclusion to be expected, seeing there is a greater biological and social similarity between members of the same generation than between members of two generations.

Perhaps the most interesting sections of the book are those in which Dr. Myerson subjects current theories of heredity to critical scrutiny, rejecting
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. Posternity 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