

As a recent writer on the subject remarks, "Opium has proved one of the greatest blessings and also one of the greatest curses known to mankind," and its control is thus a matter deserving of the closest attention of sociologists.

A comprehensive work such as the present one cannot fail to be of the greatest value to those on whom has fallen the solution of this difficult problem.

The sociological side of it is a big one, and no attempt can be made here to describe or criticize the book before us in this respect. We leave that to other pens, but our impression is that our authors deal with it most ably, and little, if any, ground is left uncovered.

The historical and medical sides are, however, of interest to psychiatrists, especially the latter. The use of opium as a therapeutic agent dates from very early times, the first known mention of it being in the language of the Sumerians, the non-Semitic people who inhabited Mesopotamia three or four thousand years before the Christian era. The use and abuse of opium from those days onwards is the subject of two chapters headed respectively the "Development of the Problem," and "Ætiology." The general conclusion is that, as regards the abuse of opium, the greatest predisposing factor is the make-up of the individual. Further studies in this direction are recommended by the authors.

The general nature of chronic opium intoxication, the pathology of the somatic and psychic changes involved, tolerance, dependence, symptomatology, types of users and treatment are all dealt with historically. For instance, in the chapter on treatment, after a brief introduction, the views and practices (supported by appropriate extracts of their writings) of the following physicians are given: George B. Wood, 1856; Alonzo Calkins, 1871; Horace Day, 1872; A. Stillé, 1874; E. Levinstein, 1875; J. B. Mattison, 1876-93; H. H. Kane, 1880; C. W. Earle, 1880; D. Jouet, 1883; William Pepper, 1886; A. Erlenmeyer, 1886; R. Burhat, 1884; B. Ball and O. Jennings, 1887-1909; Paul Sollier, 1894; William Osler, 1894, and 37 others, in a chapter of 111 pages—a good example of the thoroughness with which our authors have performed their task.

This book is chiefly a work of reference as far as the general reader is concerned, but for those studying the question, either medically or sociologically, it is a work they cannot well afford to be without.

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*Aids to Psychology.* By JOHN H. EWEN, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.  
London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1929. 6½ in. by 4¼ in.  
Pp. vii + 163. Price 3s. 6d. net.

This is a recent addition to a popular Students' Aid Series, and like its companions, amounts to a very useful note-book which most students would otherwise create for themselves during a course of reading for an examination or for reference in future literary work.

In both these respects the usefulness of these Aids would be much enhanced if they were interleaved here and there to permit of additional notes.

*Aids to Psychology* maintains fully the reputation that the whole series has gained for reliability and helpfulness, and can with confidence be recommended to those studying for a diploma in psychological medicine, which one gathers from the preface is the author's main purpose. Among others the author makes use of the well-known psychological works of Stout, McDougall, Woodworth, James, Dumville and Hart—a good selection.

The value of these Aids lies chiefly in the fact that they correlate the views of many authorities on any one point, and lead to a better comprehension and grasp of the subject. This, fortunately, is achieved in an able manner by Dr. Ewen; otherwise such a compilation would become frankly a cram-book and one not to be recommended.

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*How to Stain the Nervous System. A Laboratory Handbook for Students and Technicians.* By J. ANDERSON, Head Laboratory Assistant at the National Hospital, Queen Square, London; with an introduction by J. G. GREENFIELD, B.Sc., M.D., F.R.C.P., Pathologist to the same hospital. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone, 1929. Crown 8vo. Pp. 137. Price 5s.

The want of an up-to-date small handbook of this description has long been felt in every mental hospital laboratory, and this one can be commended without reserve in every respect. It is not overloaded like some of its predecessors with methods of doubtful utility or of historic interest only, but utilizes those in every-day use at the National Hospital, and other hospitals of approved reliability. It is thoroughly practical in every chapter. These comprise fixing and cutting the brain and spinal cord, celloidin sections and staining methods, frozen sections and methods in which they are used, paraffin sections and some special methods in which they are used, special methods for staining fat, iron and calcium, and miscellaneous directions and information.

The useful plan is adopted of first describing a method in general terms, and then giving a *résumé* which gives specific instructions step by step.

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*Mental Hygiene.* By DANIEL WOLFORD LA RUE, Ph.D. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927. Large crown 8vo. Pp. x + 443. Illus. Price 10s.

We had prepared a lengthy notice of this book, but, on reviewing the completed document, it became apparent that we had gone far beyond the scope of an ordinary review, and discussed the trends of mental hygiene literature at so wide an angle that the merits or otherwise of our author's contribution occupied a secondary rather than a primary place in what we had written. The time, however, has been usefully spent, for the scope and character