

Part II.—Reviews.

A Text-Book of Psychiatry. By LEONARDO BIANCHI, M.D., translated by JAMES H. MACDONALD, M.B., Ch.B.

Professor Bianchi is already so well known in this country as an eminent and distinguished psychiatrist that the translation of this important work from his pen will be especially welcome to all those who are interested in the study of insanity. He has produced a book which is worthy of the highest place in the literature of the subject, and one which will no doubt rank as a standard work. By interpreting the facts of insanity in the light of the most recent researches in psychology and in the anatomy and physiology of the brain, he has placed the whole subject on a broad and scientific basis, and presented it in a manner which abundantly demonstrates the great progress which has taken place in this branch of medicine in the last few years. In no instance is the author content with a mere recital of symptoms. Each type of mental disorder is subjected to a keen psychological analysis, in which a consistent effort is made to trace the essential change which has occurred in the personality and the factors which have led to its disintegration. Disputed questions are treated by a historical and impartial survey of the various views that have been advanced, followed by a clear statement of the author's own opinions, this impression of individuality which pervades the whole book forming one of its most pleasing features. Though adding to the size of the volume, it would perhaps have somewhat enhanced its value as a work of reference if a bibliographical list had been appended to the end of each chapter.

The contents are included in about 900 pages and are divided into three parts. Part 1 deals with the anatomy and physiology of the brain, Part 2 with the psychological aspect of insanity, and Part 3 with the individual forms of mental disorder. The volume is clearly printed and contains numerous diagrams and illustrations. The subject matter is so wide in its scope that it is only possible to mention briefly its salient features.

In the introduction the evolution of the nervous system, with its psychic counterpart, the mind, is shortly traced from the most primitive to the highest forms. Purely speculative problems, such as the relationship between mind and matter, and the question of intelligence in the lower organisms are not discussed, though a few pages are devoted to the practical considerations involved in the association of psychic disturbances with bodily disorders.

In the chapter devoted to anatomy an excellent account is given of the central course taken by the nerves of special sensation, and also a description of the motor tracts and associative fibres. The much debated "neurone" theory of Waldeyer and Ramon y Cajal is discussed somewhat fully, the opposing theory of "continuity," associated more recently with the names of Apaty and Bethe, receiving due prominence. The author would seem to favour the latter view, and, indeed, in a later

chapter he states that the neurone doctrine is almost dead, differing in this respect from many of the neurologists in this country.

The whole of the section devoted to the physiology of the brain is worthy of careful study, especially those pages which deal with the so-called motor areas. The problem as to the true significance of this cerebral region is beset with many difficulties. Many physiologists regard them as a portion of the extensive sensory zones in which the ideas and images of movements are located, these centres exciting the true motor centres which are situated at the base of the brain. According to such a view, a lesion of the Rolandic area does not cause a true motor paralysis, but rather a functional defect of movement due to inability to recall the necessary motor images or ideal conceptions which must precede any voluntary activity. This position is shown to be probably an incorrect one, and the author vigorously supports the opinion of Ferrier and others that this region is a true motor centre in the ordinary meaning of the term. Professor Bianchi's views as to the function of the frontal lobes are already well known, and they are here stated at some length, expressing as a final inclusion that "the frontal lobes are, in their ultimate analysis, the organs for the direction of the individual in the social and cosmic environment"—a sentence aptly describing their complex significance.

Part 2, devoted to psychology, both normal and morbid, occupies over 200 pages. Such an extensive survey of this aspect of insanity cannot be considered excessive. However much light may be shed on mental disorders by a consideration of the physical phenomena which accompany them, the necessity for a study of the subject from its psychological aspect cannot be over-estimated. A knowledge of psychology, divorced from metaphysics and based upon the scientific data of physiology and neurology, cannot fail to be of the utmost value in obtaining a true insight into the morbid transformations of the personality which occur in the insane, the importance of the subject justifying its full consideration in a work of this character.

The first two chapters are occupied by the consideration of sensation, perception and attention, with their disorders, embracing naturally the chief sensory disturbances, illusions and hallucinations.

Chapter III is devoted to the physio-pathology of memory, and includes an account of its special and general defects. In the former variety clinical examples are given of cases which manifest those symptoms known by the somewhat confusing terms of amnesia retrograda and anterograda. Several cases of duplicated personality are also described.

Chapter IV treats of ideation and its disorders with a long account of the development of language, indicating that in its rudimentary forms it is merely a method of emotional rather than ideational expression, and showing how it has developed coincidentally with the evolution of the intellect. In discussing the laws of association special stress is laid on the importance of the law of contrast in the genesis of delusional states. It is shown that the attention devoted to an idea keeps the contrasting idea on the threshold of consciousness, and that this suppressed mental product is liable to obtain predominance in consciousness and manifest itself as a delusion. To mention an instance given by the author: An individual of religious temperament may

fortify herself by ideas of the Grace of God, and contrasting notions—fears of hell, etc.—remain as a menace to her peace of mind inactively in consciousness. If the “regulative power of consciousness decays the Grace of God disappears as an objective, and the ideative constellation of hell, demons and damnation with the relative emotions, is substituted for it (delusions of contrast).” Such views have been especially mentioned as they would appear to be very suggestive in elucidating many cases of delusional insanity.

Chapter V deals with emotions and sentiments. James’ somatic theory is fully discussed, though the author, while recognising the extreme difficulty of the subject, is unable to entirely accept his views. The last two chapters of this section deal briefly with the will and consciousness, their disorders being more fully treated in the clinical portion of the work.

Part 3 opens with a comprehensive scheme for investigating the “method and field of clinical inquiry.” In this part of the work—the study of psycho-pathology—the student cannot fail to be impressed, not only by the broad basis of the scientific reasoning upon which Professor Bianchi rests his analysis and conclusions, but also by the open and generous treatment of a subject that has been so largely obscured by the fruitless efforts of many able psychiatrists to form premature conclusions and classifications which have proved to be misleading.

While admitting that our ideal should be a classification based upon anatomico-pathological criteria, the author states that at the outset of his work he had reluctantly resolved against presenting any classification of mental diseases, deeming any such classification “almost useless, as giving only what is incomplete and therefore not very vital.”

In Chapter II he discusses the fallacies of a simple nosographic classification, and clearly points out the confusion which arises from that which is founded upon ætiology alone, or considered in respect to the various epochs of life. The psychological criterion followed by Mendel is also discarded as misleading and founded more on appearance than reality. From the classification adopted by Krafft-Ebing and Shüle, based upon ætiological and anatomico-pathological criteria, Professor Bianchi picks out the most important features, notably those which refer to the grade of evolution of the brain, and in a true eclectic spirit he says: “Having now recognised generally the impossibility of holding to a single criterion it is clear . . . that that classification gives promise of wider appreciation and longer duration, which assumes the greatest number of fundamental criteria on which is based the general knowledge concerning the genesis and nature of mental affections.” And with this idea he puts forward—as a working basis—a scheme “inspired by nosological, ætiological, and anatomico-pathological criteria,” comprising three groups:

- (1) Essentially evolutionary psycho-cerebral defects.
- (2) Mental affections of infective, autotoxic and toxic origin developing in individuals regularly evolved.
- (3) Affections with an organic substratum, localised or diffuse, in the central organ of mind.

That the author is fully cognisant of the difficulties that underlie even a scheme so simple, but yet comprehensive, the next few pages clearly

demonstrate; and a fitting reference is made to the clinical criterion adopted in its widest sense by Kraepelin. It is beyond the scope of this review to enter into the composition of the many subdivisions of these groups, which the reader will find most instructive and interesting; but it is not too much to say that Professor Bianchi has given us a classification—admittedly provisional—founded on the most acute observation, and based upon the most accurate and scientific criteria known to the world to-day.

Of the succeeding chapters, Chapter VI, on hysterical insanity, deserves special mention. In it the subject of hysteria, so frequently elusive and enigmatical to the student, is treated with masterly clearness and unfailing interest. The views of Sollier and of Janet are briefly reviewed by the author, and a useful footnote for reference and explanation is inserted—a feature which might have been extended with advantage to the reader of this work. Many instructive observations on cases, and several good illustrations illuminate the context.

It is difficult to select points of interest to comment upon from a book that from cover to cover is so productive alike of interest and knowledge; a reference must, however, be made to the chapter on sensory insanity—Chapter XVI. It is scarcely too much to say that here the student will find himself conducted to heights from which he may look down upon those other and lesser eminences which he may have climbed or essayed to climb without ever obtaining so clear and uninterrupted a view of the geography of the realm he studied to know. From this point of vantage he may obtain a clearer understanding of such vexed terms as “*amentia*,” “*acute dementia*” and “*mental confusion*,” and attempt to unravel the tangled controversy over the “*dementia præcox*,” so ably described by Kraepelin—a syndrome which was never intended to be more than a mile-stone on the road to the understanding of an important group of psychoses, and as such has been of infinite service to those who have profited by the direction it conveyed without wasting time in criticising its terminology. In most instances these mental states are regarded by the author as only syndromes, “*particular attitudes of the disease, not the disease in its entirety*,” or “*a chronological feature of a complex psychosis*.” Professor Bianchi, from his wide experience, has closely studied the disease from its beginning, and he says, “*the almost constant fact is the hallucinatory explosion*.” He regards hallucinations as the radical and substantial phenomena which provoke the abnormal intellectual and affective states, which are now familiarly known in asylums under various names, but which, he maintains, are not to be assigned the dignity of psychopathic entities, but must be “*framed in the picture which includes them all*,” *viz.*, the essential sensory disorder. This disease is traced through many grades, and instructively illustrated by well-described cases.

It is not possible to over-estimate this step forward in the interpretation of these various syndromes; and the light shed by the author's clear insight into their inception, and acute observation of their progress here as well as in his exposition of many other psychoses, notably paranoia and the neurasthenic states, will go far to elucidate those difficult problems which are the essence of psychopathology, and upon the

solution of which must rest the first attempt at a truly scientific classification of mental disorders. This review would be incomplete without a reference to the great service rendered by Dr. James MacDonald in presenting so admirable a translation to the many students of Professor Bianchi who are unable to read his work in the original tongue.

Physiological Economy in Nutrition, with special reference to the Minimal Proteid Requirement of the Healthy Man: an Experimental Study. By RUSSELL H. CHITTENDEN, Ph.D. London: Heineman, 1905. Pp. 473. Price 14s. nett.

This important work on nutrition, how best to maintain the human body in health and strength with the least expenditure of energy, has been produced to show by scientific investigation what the physiological necessities are. The experiments were conducted with professional men, with volunteers from the United States Army, and with University athletes. Photographs of the subjects are given, and exact details of the conditions observed. The subject is not new, and the usual dietetic error of overfeeding has been attacked by many before and since Cornaro. It is not from the merely personal standpoint that Professor Chittenden states the case; it is rather as the result of accurate experimental research. It is apparent that the products of proteid metabolism constitute a menace to health, and the aim of those who desire the highest efficiency must therefore be to attain that efficiency on the smallest amount of food. Professor Chittenden, by careful analysis of the dietary, and of the excreta, justifies the general conclusion that a professional man can live on a much smaller amount of proteid food than is usually considered essential without loss of vigour; that soldiers require less than 50 grammes of proteid daily instead of 105 grammes. This economy led to an improvement of the neuromuscular apparatus with less sense of fatigue, under observation of five months' duration.

In short the work is an appeal for temperance, for "moderation in diet, especially in the taking of proteid foods, which means a great saving in the wear and tear of the bodily machinery."

Some years ago, in 1893, a committee of the Medico-Psychological Association reported upon Asylum Dietaries. In view of the work accomplished by Professor Chittenden since that time, and the increased importance of metabolism recognised as a factor in the causation of insanity, it is apparent that the time has arrived to reconsider our position. Dr. L. C. Bruce urges that milk and plentiful hot drinks are demanded in the treatment of certain forms of mental disorder. Professor Meyer, of Göttingen, found that artificial feeding was rarely required, and Dr. Jules Morel, of Mons, has also been sparing of the stomach tube in his practice. The vulgar notion that every sick person should have a plethora of nourishing food is no longer tenable; and it is therefore of the utmost importance that we should make further inquiry into asylum methods in the light of strict experimental research. The value of Professor Chittenden's work has been widely acknowledged, and it should not be allowed to remain a dead letter for us.