

*Mental Affections: an Introduction to the Study of Insanity.* By JOHN MACPHERSON, M.D., F.R.C.P.E. London, Macmillan and Co., 1899, royal 8vo, pp. 380. Price 12s. net.

Dr. Macpherson has done a real service to those engaged in the study of insanity by publishing his lectures to students at the Royal Colleges' School of Medicine in Edinburgh. Although these lectures have been extended and rearranged, the author does not claim that they are exhaustive in scope or complete in detail; yet we find that they are admirably adapted for the purposes of that formal instruction, which must necessarily be supplemented by the clinical teaching.

We rejoice to observe that Dr. Macpherson set before his students a coherent account of psychiatry founded upon the scientific facts of anatomy and physiology. His is not a facile primer of the obvious, but a masterly digest of our most advanced knowledge of the nervous system. Time was when that knowledge remained restricted and barren; happily there is now at the service of the medical profession a vast accumulation of observations made by investigators of every kind. Dr. Macpherson has selected and arranged the scattered literature of the subject from special papers and general works which are embarrassing to deal with, owing to the rapidity of the production, and minutiae of real importance. We owe him a debt of gratitude for the labours thus undertaken, and especially for the production of a book which is eminently characterised by a straightforward and fluent method. It is not given to every one to determine the best and most trustworthy work, nor to render crabbed scientific memoirs into readable English; and it does not require any great critical acumen to recognise the mastery which Dr. Macpherson has attained over the important subject to which he has devoted his life. Whatever his difficulties may have been in producing his book, we find no trace of them in perusing it; and that is the highest praise concerning the manner of presentment.

No doubt these lectures require careful and repeated perusal for the assimilation of facts and opinions regarding our intricate specialised pursuit, and there are points open to debate in various directions. Psychiatry, like general medicine, is in a fluid state, and one can only hope to mark the epoch subject to the limitations of present-day knowledge. No books evanesce so quickly as medical works; but no physician who has the honour of his calling at heart can afford to neglect the very latest pronouncements of science. It is on this ground that we urge that Dr. Macpherson's lectures should be widely read and carefully studied.

Consequent upon these general observations there is little need for an extended consideration of the work in detail. Part I is devoted to the evolution of insanity, with special reference to heredity and determining causes. These subjects are treated in an excellent manner, insanity being correlated with other diathetic conditions and placed on the sure foundation of physical disease—*i. e.* "one of the many manifestations of the neuropathic constitution;" and, further, that it is "a degeneration which extends from mere disorders of metabolism up to the most profound nervous and physical abnormalities and the ex-

inction of the race." We assume that Dr. Macpherson would not claim these as original observations ; but how necessary it is that such conclusions should be formulated upon a full consideration of the underlying facts is apparent from the foolish remarks of a medical journalist, who lately expressed the fear that hysterical men and women would be the most numerous class of out-patients on the appointment of consulting psychiatrists to our general hospitals ; as if morbid psychology were exclusive of hysteria in all its manifestations. We would fain hope that, important as Dr. Macpherson's book is to us, it will reach those who should be prevented from such absurd teaching.

Part II gives an account of the minute anatomy of the cerebral cortex, and deals with the doctrine of the neuron. The later work of Apáthy is referred to with approval, and Dr. Macpherson concludes that the present neuron theory must be considerably modified. It is to be remarked, however, that Apáthy's researches have been exclusively devoted to invertebrates, and we must still await his control observations as to nerve-cells of a higher type. The rest of this section is occupied with an exposition of modern psychology and an excellent discussion of "unconscious mind." Following upon these comes the pathological part of the book, which relates to physical and mental stigmata. Dr. Macpherson's wide reading has not prevented him from presenting his own definite yet moderate opinions.

Part III deals with clinical symptomatology, the various insanities known as mania, melancholia, paranoia, confusional, degenerate, etc. As might be expected, Dr. Macpherson has much to say in reference to toxic influences, including general paralysis under this causation. Now and then he surprises us with a lapse into nomenclature which should be abandoned, such as *idiopathic* mental affections, or *moral* causes. We fully recognise the difficulty of classifying the insanities at the present stage of our knowledge, or of discarding terms which are equivocal in significance. A discussion of these points would lead us far beyond the limits of a mere review, but we may indicate a doubt if it be desirable to give "Insanity caused by Brain Disease" as the heading of a chapter, while the whole work goes to prove that brain disease is the common factor throughout. Not that the author can be regarded as bound by traditions, for he declares that the symptoms of "phthisical insanity can be equally well accounted for by the neurasthenia which arises from malnutrition and physical weakness," and deprecates the formation of a variety in classification for which there is "neither necessity nor clear foundation." We congratulate Dr. Macpherson on his having been so open-minded in forming opinions, and in advocating these opinions, with moderation when they are doubtful, with lucidity when they are definite.

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*Recherches cliniques et thérapeutiques sur l'Epilepsie, l'Hystérie, et l'Idiotie.*

Par BOURNEVILLE, avec la collaboration de MM. Bellin, Boyce, Chapotin, Dardel, Katz, Noir (J). Paul, Boucons, et Poulard. Vol. xx. (*Clinical and Therapeutical Researches on Epilepsy, Hysteria, and Idiocy*, by BOURNEVILLE, etc.). Paris : aux Bureaux