

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.

J. R. LORD.

---

*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.

J. R. LORD.

---

*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

of mental hygiene literature generally urgently demands treatment if the mental hygiene movement is not to suffer.

It is a case of "save me from my friends." Enthusiasm tends to outrun discretion; theory is mistaken for fact, and superficial knowledge of the subject is resulting in diffusiveness, verbosity, confused thinking, sensationalism and inaccuracy. This wider treatment is only postponed.

There is no doubt that Dr. la Rue has given his subject the closest study, and a discriminating reader of his book will be rewarded by a rich harvest of valuable information and practical guidance on mental hygiene.

In his preface, addressed to "Dear Fellow Student," our author says: "I have tried to include that which is most interesting and important for you to know in order that you may school yourself and your children or pupils in the ways of the healthy mind and thus contribute to the mental health of the community." The book is therefore addressed to teachers and parents.

Heading each chapter is an exercise, and the paragraphs that follow are of the nature of an exposition of the points thus raised. At the end of each chapter are to be found class exercises, points for further study, topics for special investigation and report (authors are recommended), and a list of references.

The book is written professedly from the psycho-physical angle to impress upon the reader that man is a bio-mental unit. The result is a predominance of physiology. The author early adopts the hypothesis of the identity of experience with brain activity.

For him the psyche is a function of the brain. Later he states that "body causes mental changes and mind causes bodily changes." He rejects every form of psycho-physical parallelism. He apparently finds it not inconsistent to be at one and the same time a materialistic monist and a psycho-physical interactionist. In this he follows the example of Aristotle, whose realism was a monism of substance and a dualism of body and mind. A better statement of this relationship is that all mental processes are dependent on physiological processes. The brain is thus the seat of the psyche, but mental phenomena are dependent upon the harmonious working of the whole organism in all its parts.

We commend this view-point to the author's consideration; the adoption of it will not interfere with the metaphysical views of anyone. It would also pave the way for a more psychological treatment of his subject. To explain thought and behaviour in physiological or a psycho-physical language can never be really illuminating.

It may, when we know something more about the physiological basis of mind, answer the question "how?," but never "why?" For this, though recognizing man's limitations in this respect, we must look to modern psychology and sociology, especially in regard to those dynamic factors, the instincts, accepted by many as the prime movers of all human activity. The conditioning of these by education and the social organization is the basic principle underlying practical mental hygiene.

The author, however, manages to include a fair amount of dynamic psychology of a common-sense and practical kind notwithstanding its physiological bias.

His psychiatry is surprisingly good considering that his personal experience of the mentally afflicted may, as a layman, be small.

The ignorance of the layman betrays itself here and there. Among the questions mental hygiene should help to answer we find: "Is an insane person conscious of pain?" "Why does the physical strength of a madman increase, and why does not the mind grow stronger when the physical organs act so powerfully?" "Will hard thinking on one subject drive a person insane?" "Are we all insane at times?" etc.

The effort to write up mental hygiene in language other than psychological and sociological has led to a coining of new terms, a strange phraseology, and the statement of pure speculations as facts.

It is somewhat appalling to think of our young people being taught to believe and utter these physiological speculations and crudities, and the disaster that might overtake good literature by the substitution, for instance, of "phreno-mens" for brain, "phreno-mental energy" for the vital impulse, "the stream of transmission" for the flow of ideas, "neurograms" for ideas and experiences, and the introduction of other strange and totally unnecessary terms.

Dr. la Rue's decided preference for physiological explanations seems to have rendered him blind to the fact that physiology, like other sciences, distinguishes between its facts and its hypotheses.

He has no justification for preaching the mnemonic principle of Semon's or Prince's registration of thought and other experiences by "neurograms" as if these were physiological facts. Even as hypotheses they are by no means generally accepted—in fact they are certainly opposed to the modern conception of dynamic mind. As Bleuler says, "concepts are not fixed; they are easily supplemented or transformed by subsequent experiences."

All mental processes are pattern actions or reactions, but the mind acts as a whole and in every part and synthesizing of experiences in the psychic personality, which means a constant moulding, trimming, educating, adding new experiences, so that the psychic organization (or if you like it, the neural organization subserving not physiological, but psychic functions) is always up-to-date and efficient, and not mouldy and clogged with an accumulation of useless and cast-off hypostatized "engrams" or "neurograms." Such fixation of engrams, neurograms or, as the psychologist would say, constellations or complexes of ideas, etc., not being amenable to mental synthesis or digestion are, according to modern psycho-pathology, the basis of the psycho-neuroses and of much abnormal behaviour, even amounting to serious mental disorder (*vide* Hart's *Political Complexes*).

Our author's psycho-physical treatment of the subject leads him astray at times. He says that fatal diseases do not, in general, prove fatal until they attack the brain. Our clinical experience would point to the contrary.

Surely Dr. la Rue has heard of the tripod of life? People die ultimately of cerebral, circulatory or respiratory failure—usually circulatory.

Again, he says that mental illness or defect, like that of the body, may be either partial or complete. Even one only of his brain "centres" of mental function or "traits" may be affected. This, of course, is still a legal fiction. Partial insanity, as far as it concerned psychiatrists, died years ago.

Our author's adoption of "phreno-mens" centres for character "traits" leads him to express his belief in phrenology—such is the lure of the "bio-mental" conception of the psyche. It is an unusual experience in 1929 to have to say that phrenology finds no support either physiologically or clinically. It had its period of usefulness, but this was chiefly posthumously. As a science it disintegrated and died, and its resurrection, even as an hypothesis (which in fact occurs in this book) can serve no further useful purpose and can only lead to absurdities. Of all things, character implies whole-mind actions and reactions.

One good feature of the book, which from beginning to end is healthily constructed despite its imperfection, is that one finds in it no support for behaviourism or for the theory of psychic determination. It breathes free-will. Speaking of the vital urge or *horme*, or, adopting his own terminology, "phreno-mental energy," the author says, "The stream of transmission, considered in relation to the forces that support it and the forces that control it, is the heart of the human personality—call it by what name you will."

The "capital consciousness" engendered in the "stream of transmission" of "phreno-mental energy" perceives, remembers, imagines, feels and acts "or sets the body into action to secure life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and integration centres, prevent any centre from running away with the personality or any from being submerged, giving the whole a co-operative, dominant purpose. Education means integration, and one who is not efficiently integrated is not educated.

Translated (as much of the book has to be to understand it) into ordinary language, the author means that thought and social sense—the highest psychic realm—in man occupy the master position, enabling man not only to react but to act back to stimuli both from within and without.

We doubt very much, however, whether anyone can come up to Dr. la Rue's standard of self-mastery implied in rules for mental hygiene which the exigencies of space prevents us from quoting.

One's clinical experience is that mental, nervous, and especially autonomic nervous activity are adversely affected by conscious attention and interference, and not uncommonly results in disorganization or paralysis of function. The great weight of such rules should be to promote environmental conditions likely to stimulate healthy but automatic reactions. Self-analysis can readily be carried too far and excite a morbid frame of mind. For knowledge of our possibilities and imperfections we should trust to what the practical experiences of life teaches us, rather

than to introspective methods, and if in doubt or difficulty we should never fail to seek the advice of those competent to give it.

Our final word is that if Dr. la Rue will relieve his book of its overload of physiology and adopt a terminology which is understood the world over, in whatever language it is translated, the wisdom and good teaching there is in it will be more apparent, and thereby have greater force.

J. R. LORD.

---

*Western Australia: State Psychological Clinic. Annual Report for the Year 1927-28.* Perth, 1928. Pp. 24.

A few months ago we commented upon the report of the first year's work done at this institution. The report for the second year has now arrived. The excellent start made appears to have been well maintained, an increased number of cases having been dealt with. One result of this increase has been to accentuate the difficulty caused by insufficiency of staff. It is pointed out that much of the psychologist's time is occupied in routine tasks and calculations, which could be as well performed by a junior assistant. The proper development of the clinic, especially in the direction of treatment, has thus been hindered.

There was a noteworthy increase in the percentage of children of superior intellectual endowment who were brought to the clinic for educational and vocational guidance. Such children are likely to become community leaders, and expert advice in their cases is much to be desired.

Passing to the other end of the intellectual scale, an attempt was made to estimate the number of mentally defective children in the State schools. The percentage of such children was found to be 2.2. No provision for special schools has yet been made. As a result, the progress of 50,000 average children is delayed and impeded. The projected legislation to deal with the problem of mental deficiency has not yet been enacted. The case of a troublesome and dangerous epileptic boy of eleven years of age is mentioned. The only way in which he can be dealt with is by being certified as insane.

A commencement has been made in the psychological investigation of prisoners. The number so dealt with is, at present, far too small to justify any general conclusions. It may, however, be noted that deficiency in "poise, foresight, and self-control" was more frequent than ordinary intelligence defect.

One of the most interesting parts of the report deals with the results obtained by the use of the Pressey emotion tests (with certain necessary modifications of vocabulary). These tests provide the most promising method yet devised for the estimation of emotional abnormality. It should, perhaps, be explained that one of these tests requires the subject to cross out, from a long list of words, everything which he has ever dreaded, or worried about, while another test requires him to make a similar selection of likes and