

whereas "as a scientific account it well might have been condensed within the compass of fifty pages. I think my little ruse was successful."

In the Preface he also briefly traces the struggles of the dynamic point of view from Janet's classic studies of hysteria in 1887. He says that, even in 1906, when he founded his *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, there was so little understanding of what it would discuss that some of his outstanding colleagues in the medical profession said that he was about to launch a "spook journal." Those of us who lived in Boston at that time can perhaps well guess who some of these distinguished neurologists and alienists were! "Now," he says, the "Freudian tide is slowly receding, and a safe and sane dynamic psychology is coming into its own again."

The scientific world will certainly welcome this volume into its book-shelves.

GEORGE VAN NESS DEARBORN.

The Psychology of Mental Disorders. By ABRAHAM MYERSON, M.D. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927. 16mo. Pp. vii + 135. Price 6s. net.

This is a plain spoken and clearly written little book, well planned for its purpose, which is to stimulate an intelligent but non-professional interest in the realities of mental disease. There is a praiseworthy absence of camouflage, and no attempt to anæsthetize the public by the use of such terms as "nervousness," "nervous breakdown," etc., into thinking that the mind is only affected in a condition known as lunacy or insanity.

Too long has this farcical attitude been maintained by fashionable physicians and dilettante social workers who really know better. The mental hygiene movement arose to dispel such insincerities and not to perpetuate them.

Myerson treats his public fearlessly, and seeks to make it definitely acquainted with the truth of the matter. It is a book of rare honesty, which, if read, will do much to dispel popular ignorance on an important subject.

It must not be thought, however, that this is merely a book of propaganda. On the contrary, it is a condensed but readable form of the author's psychiatric views and teaching presented in his larger works, and of educational value to the medical student—in fact it would be difficult to find a more concise, yet comprehensive, introduction to psychiatry.

Myerson in his discourse steers clear of metaphysical or *a priori* conceptions. Mind is a manifestation of life, a function of the organism, and disease of the brain is the cause of disease of the mind. He pays regard more to facts than to tradition, and there is a detached wholesomeness in his attitude rarely to be found in psychiatric writers.

One finishes the book distinctly encouraged in the belief that mental disease is not a hopeless problem, *i.e.*, something to be borne with patience and resignation, but one to be bravely tackled in all

its relationships—a problem, in the first place, for medical science, and of hardly less importance to those interested in normal mental hygiene, economics, industry and the law.

Part I states the problem and then deals with the fundamental concepts of psychiatry.

Parts II and III deal with the symptomatology of the major mental diseases together with their causes. Part IV is devoted to the minor mental disorders (psychoneuroses). Part V criticizes Freud's psycho-analysis as not having the note of a true science.

Which of us, not entirely befogged with this form of meta-psychology, will not feel that there is much truth in the following quotations :

"There have been writers before him (Freud) who stripped the inner covering from the thoughts and motives of men and women, but none who has gone at the job with such a grim and relentless completeness. . . . I am not at all convinced that this inner life (of primitive, seething desire which civilization represses) is unconscious—all one has to do is to watch the covert glances of men and women, to say nothing of the shallowest glance at one's own mind, to know that the unacceptable continually flits into consciousness in its nakedness, and is with more or less difficulty thrust out."

"Whether he has contributed anything very lasting to the study of mental disease is a matter time will settle, but that he has contributed to human thought in a lasting way every candid observer must enthusiastically affirm."

Part VI deals with crime, and is based upon personal acquaintance with inmates of prisons. There is much in it of psychiatric interest, but the entourage is of course American. The author's views on heredity and mental disease are stated in the next part, and are the result of a research conducted by him for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. They were the subject-matter of a book already reviewed in this journal. Of their importance there can be no doubt. Myerson placed heredity in its true perspective. An excellent chapter on mental hygiene closes the book.

There is not a glib or stale statement to be found in it; interest freshens with every page, and our final word is that 6s. will be well spent in its purchase.

J. R. LORD.

The Opium Problem. By CHARLES E. TERRY, M.D., and MILDRED PELLENS. New York: The Committee on Drug Addictions in collaboration with the Bureau of Social Hygiene, Inc., 1928. 9½ in. by 6 in. Pp. xvi + 1042. Price 22s. 6d. net.

This study was undertaken by the authors at the instance of an American Committee on Drug Addiction organized in 1921, and was designed to supply the Committee with information on the following points: extent of the chronic use of opium; the nature and ætiology of chronic opium intoxication; how the condition should be treated and avoided.

Though much of the book is chiefly of American interest, the "dope" question is one of world-wide importance, and is receiving attention in every legislative assembly, chiefly at the instance of the League of Nations.