

## Part II.—Reviews.

**Modern Trends in Psychological Medicine.** Edited by NOEL G. HARRIS, M.D., F.R.C.P., D.P.M. London: Butterworth and Co. Ltd., 1948. Pp. 450. Price 50s. net.

This work is not just another systematic presentation of psychiatry, formal and stereotyped, but it is an attempt to capture the imagination of all thoughtful medical persons whether they are or are not psychiatrists. An attempt is made—and in most instances it is a successful attempt—to state and evaluate the place of psychiatry, both in relation to the individual and to national and even international affairs. To effect his purpose Dr. Harris has enlisted the help of a galaxy of talent, a British-American team, which includes among others Samson Wright (Professor of Physiology, London University), H. R. Hamlay (Professor of Education, London University), and J. H. Masserman (Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Chicago). All of the contributors, however, are persons whose judgment and experience can be relied on. As in all books of this type there is a considerable overlap but there is no serious divergence of opinion. The standard set throughout is high, and while some of the articles will appeal more to some people than to others, yet the whole book is stimulating, instructive, and valuable for every practising psychiatrist.

The opening chapters by Harris, dealing with the Psycho-somatic concept and the importance of the Constitutional Factor, give a clear, well-balanced account of modern trends. Then follows Samson Wright's study of the Physiology of Emotions in which he describes in detail animal experimentation, and also discusses the cortico-thalamic interconnection in the light of the now familiar operation of leucotomy. He summarizes the physiological situation by stating that we cannot as yet go much further than the knowledge which Sherrington gave us in his "Integrative Action of the Nervous System."

McInnes, in his consideration of Causative Factors, deals with the topic in terms of reaction types rather than in relation to specific factors. No one cause is ever entirely specific but must always be considered in relation to the constitutional background and environmental factors. He has been impressed by the physiological approach of Sherrington, Symonds and Masserman, but in the end he comes down in favour of a broad-minded interpretation in terms of "a knowledge of personal philosophy." Perhaps he is not so critical as he might be in relation to the etiological significance of the endocrine, biochemical and vitamin factors. Again, however, one finds an interpretative etiological outlook which calls for thought and consideration.

Golla deals with electro-physiology and finds progress in electro-encephalography so rapid that it is almost impossible to give an accurate appraisal of what it is accomplishing to-day. He is inclined to speculate in relation to what we may expect in the future. He is in favour, during history-taking, of connecting the patient with an electrical apparatus so that the tension and emotional reaction of the patient may be recorded. He believes that every mental hospital or clinic should be equipped with such an apparatus. Such advice is very questionable. Many patients, nervously and mentally ill, are so suspicious, restless, perturbed, and ill-at-ease during the ordinary interview that it is probable that their emotional reactions would be greatly heightened and disturbed by a recording apparatus. There is a grave danger that clinical acumen and observation will soon become entirely discounted if too great reliance is placed on scientific aids.

Martin James, in dealing with Diagnostic Measures, is rather unconvincing

He favours a much more intense subjective approach, and apparently approves of the psychoanalytic training both of psychologists and psychiatrists. It is still very problematical whether lay analysts should be allowed to practice medicine.

The chapters by Griffiths on Marriage and Family Life, by Moodie on Child Guidance, and by Whitehorn on Psychotherapy are well written and informative. Stalker's discussion of the Psychopathic Personality is almost the most specific clinical problem dealt with. He has done it in a comprehensive and satisfying manner, and emphasizes that the concept immaturity which forms so much of the psychopathic state does not mean an inability to mature but rather the potentiality to do so provided the proper help is at hand. The introduction of the Criminal Justice Bill, and the development of criminological science should help to amalgamate the medical and legal viewpoint. That would indeed constitute a forward step in helping a group of people who are in desperate need of assistance.

After a series of articles—very competent articles—dealing with Mental Hygiene, Character Formation in relation to Education, Physical Methods of Treatment, Social and Group Psychotherapy, Personnel selection, Mental Hygiene in Industry, and Rehabilitation, the book, appropriately enough, is brought to a close by a chapter on Psychological Medicine and World Affairs, by Jules H. Masserman. This is most ably done. Criticism is at once stifled by Masserman's apologium. He states at once that he fully recognizes the limitation of psychiatry—and of psychiatrists, but he believes that the study of individual motivations is some excuse for the psychiatrist to enter the field of World Affairs. The note struck, however, is not a particularly encouraging one. He believes that there is reason to suppose that the incidence of psychiatric disorders will rise even more rapidly in our present era of dubious "peace" than it did in war-time. Now, we do not have the stabilizing effect of urgent purpose and the relief of concerted group action. "The entire world seems to be drifting into strangely familiar but now ominously pervasive forms of social psychopathology—and with no refuge in sight."

His principle hope for the future seems to be our ability to organize internationally so as to combat want and fear. He urges psychiatrists to secure some influence on policy-making and governing bodies because our experience with "anxiety ridden men" should enable us to understand the motivations, fears and patterns of action of those who may be the leaders of the nation. That is a laudable hope, it is one which every one would like to see made possible, but it will require many years before leaders are ever likely to cooperate with or be influenced by such a plan.

This book is one well worthy of intensive study, it is most thought-provoking and valuable. The editor should be warmly congratulated on having done a very efficient piece of work. In a future edition a chapter by a Psychiatric Social Worker might be included.

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**The Adolescent Child.** By W. D. WALL. London: Methuen & Co., 1948. Pp. x + 206. Price 8s. 6d.

This book attempts to describe the psychological characteristics of adolescents. Information is derived from other works and the author's investigations by means of questionnaires and tests. It suffers severely from clinical weakness, e.g. folie à deux and neurasthenia are wrongly described and Stengel's work on fugue states has made the postulation of a migratory impulse unnecessary. Adequate medical help would have eliminated such mistakes and made the book more readable. As it is, it contains numerous statements about emotional development without the theory that could co-ordinate them and give them meaning, and the work tends to be as dull as a dictionary—but not as accurate.