

so that autism and a turning from external reality results. He quotes a few cases which seem to him to be explained by his hypothesis.

M. R. BARKAS.

4. Ætiology.

The Need of Housing as a Determinant and as Content in Neuroses and Psychoses [Die Wohnungsnot als auslösendes und inhaltliches Moment bei Neurosen und Psychosen]. (Wien. klin. Woch., November 20, 1924.) Herz, M.

The author had noticed a number of the recent admissions into the Wagner-Jauregg clinic in whom the housing problem seemed to be an important factor; they formed 67 cases out of 4,703 admissions on the female side in the course of 2½ years.

A number of cases of neurosis and psychosis are described. In about a third of the 24 neurotic and psychopathic cases the need of housing appears as a determining cause of the breakdown; in the remainder, fears, depression, suspicions, etc., centred round the housing question. The psychotic cases were chiefly of the paranoid type, in which persecutions were often thought to have been the motive for the driving of the patient from her home. In these the social situation formed the content rather than the cause of the illness, though it seemed to be an ætiological factor in some schizophrenics and melancholics.

Thus a social problem of the day comes to be reflected in the contemporary picture of mental disorder.

M. R. BARKAS.

Dementia Præcox as a Type of Hereditary Degeneration. (Amer. Journ. of Psychiat., April, 1925.) Alford, Leland B.

The multiplicity of ætiological factors ascribed in dementia præcox indicate the chaotic state of our present ideas with regard to its cause. A survey of these ideas shows that they are all based on analogy with the causal factors of better-known disease processes, and it is equally fair to study dementia præcox in relation to other nervous disorders. If we consider the group of nervous affections known as hereditary degenerations or abiotrophies (about 40 are enumerated, but family amaurotic idiocy, Friedreich's ataxia and Huntington's chorea will serve as examples), it will be observed that their chief characteristics are familial occurrence, progressive course and absence of characters belonging to other processes. Where the nervous system is involved the attack seems to be limited by function rather than structure, and where, for instance, lower motor neurons are diseased without nearby structures being affected, the functions affected may include lower and upper motor neuron, extra pyramidal motor, visual, auditory, cutaneous, etc. Again, when the cord and nerves are the seat of the process, pathological changes are definite, but these are found to be obscure when the higher centres are presumably involved, as in Huntington's chorea.