Book-Reviews - Buchbesprechungen - Livres nouveaux

J. Wyrsch: Ueber akute schizophren Zustande, ihren psycho-patholo-gischen Aufbau und ihre praktische Bedeutung. (Acute schizophrenic states, their structure and practical importance.) 80 pages. S.fr. 12.—. S. Earger, Basel. This study is based on 200 cases of acute schizophrenia; only such cases were included in which the acute symptoms completely or partly subsided, so that an insight into the personal experiences and reactions of the patients during and after the acute schizophrenic states could be obtained. Four groups are distinguished, which are, however, connected by transitional forms. In group I the patient tries to keep distant from the disease, to keep it outside the psychic sphere. In group II the patient experiences the disease like some senseless impulses, without resistance, without finding any sense or meaning in it. The patients of group III live completely with in the disease, the symptoms of which they do not experience as pathologic. This is also the case in group IV; but the psychotic experiences are here further developed and formed, gaining an apparently independent existence. These differences in the type of the reaction seem to be dependent on the characterologic structure of the patient.

E. S.

W. H. v. Wgss: Grundformen der Affektivitat (Basic forms of emotions). 104 pages. S.fr. 13.60. S. Karger, Basel. After a general discussion of the nature of emotions, their biological roots and their somatic expression, the monograph deals with the various types of emotions (pain, hunger, thirst, fatigue, dizziness, anxiety, joy, distress), particularly those in patients with bodily diseases. The chapter "on brain and emotions is mainly based upon experiments on Cannon, Bard, and Hess, emphasizing the rôle of the diencephalon. A discussion of the evolutionary theories of Monakow and of the creative importance of emotions conclude this interesting booklet.

E. S.

M. Rose und M. Mannheim: Vincent van Gogh im Spiegel seiner Handschrift (V. v. G. in the mirror of his handwriting). 64 pages. S.fr. 8.—. S. Karger, Basel. The authors make an interesting experiment to gain insight into Van Gogh’s personality by an analysis of the handwriting of his letters, a large number of which is reproduced in facsimile. They agree with Jaspers that van Gogh was schizophrenic and conclude from the study of his handwriting that the disease started as early as 1873. The letters show also clearly manic and depressive phases of the disease. The value of the book is enhanced by the enclosed collection of selected letters.

E. S.

H. Baruk: Psychiatrie m6dicale physiologique et experimentale. 827 pages. F.fr. 220.—. Masson & Cie, Paris 1938. This book is the logical continuation of the author’s former studies on catatonia. In order to approach the physiological basis of disturbances of volitional innervation, the mental disorders accompanying organic brain
diseases, then those in catatonia and hysteria are analyzed; clinical and psychological studies are combined with animal experimentation, particularly in an endeavor to prove a toxic origin of catatonia. The second part of the book is devoted to a revision of the psychiatric nosography trying to replace the old static and nosographic psychiatry by a physiologic psychiatry that is in close relation to the other fields of medicine. The necessity is emphasized of studying the initial period and the prepsychopathic period of the psychoses (which are usually not seen in an asylum). Such studies give us an understanding of mental disorders as variable reactions to a great variety of factors. In the third part it is shown how the introduction of biological methods influences also the psychiatric therapy with special emphasis upon the treatment of the toxic, infectious, endocrine and vascular causes. Thus this book is an important step towards a modern conception and treatment of mental disorders.

E. S.


This monograph may be compared with the volume on neuro-physiology in the Handbuch der Neurologie over which it has the distinct advantage that it is written, instead of by several contributors by a single author who is particularly experienced in this field. In nearly every chapter Dr. Fulton can report about his own experimental work or that of his associates. This is particularly manifested in the parts dealing with the cerebral cortex, where vast experimental evidence drawn from primates is collected. The recent developments not only in neurophysiology but also in neuroanatomy are considered so that the student finds the necessary correlation of function and morphology. Dr. Fulton may be heartily congratulated to this valuable book.

E. S.


After reviewing the development of our knowledge of the thalamus, Walker describes the myelo- and cyloarchitectural structure of the thalamus. He determined experimentally the site of termination of the various afferent systems as well as the arrangement of the thalamocortical systems, trying to correlate the findings with the clinical symptomatology. Thus this monograph represents an important progress in elucidating the role of the thalamus in sensation and should be read not only by anatomists and physiologists, but also by clinicians.


The seventh edition of this excellent introduction into the methods of clinical neurology has been thoroughly revised. New illustrations have been added particularly in the chapter on ventriculography and encephalography. Arteriography is briefly described, and a chapter on examination of unconscious patients is added. The book will be valuable not only for undergraduates but also for postgraduate students who wish to become familiar with the latest developments in this field.