

Der Schwachsinn. (Mental Defect). By F. Dubitscher, Permanent Secretary in the Reich Ministry of Health, *Handbuch der Erbkrankheiten*, heraus von Guett, Dok. med., Arthur, Berlin, Band I. Georg Thieme, Leipzig. pp. 358.

This book is divided into two sections, one clinical, the second major section dealing throughout with researches into intelligence. This second part contains a valuable survey of all the more usual intelligence tests. In addition to the problem of the inheritance of mental deficiency, Part I deals also with the transmission of normal psychological faculties. Symptoms, treatment, anatomy and transmission of the different forms of mental defect are described separately and in detail.

The classification of Weygandt with very slight alteration appears to be the most practical of the attempts to group the various aetiological types. The changes which have occurred at different times in the importance attributed to heredity as a cause in feeble-mindedness is clearly set forth with numerous examples from the literature. The treatment assembles brilliantly the results both of the earliest and most recent genetical researches; indeed, the whole literature on mental deficiency is covered almost without omissions.

The question of separate inheritance of the different grades of defect is left open by the author. Uniform approach to the distinction between grades, treated uniformly, appears to be a pre-requisite for the resolution of this problem. The author also refrains from giving an absolutely unequivocal answer to the problem of genotypic identity in hereditary feeble-mindedness. Stumpff's view that feeble-mindedness depends on a combination of several psychological features which are separately inherited is supported by the author. He also mentions numerous authors, according to whom there is a high probability of unitary inheritance of feeble-mindedness as a single trait.

The author regards it as important to distinguish more sharply special personality types amongst the feeble-minded which are possibly inherited as a familial configuration.

In addition to heredity, he recognises the following as the only certain causes of mental defect: birth-trauma, short-term births, syphilis in the mother, alcoholism of the parents, irradiation of the pregnant

mother, injuries and cerebral diseases in the child. The following bear no special significance in this regard: blood-relationship of genotypically healthy parents, illegitimacy, environmental influences, conception during intoxication and abnormal mental impressions of the pregnant mother. The factors which are recognised as causal may often act in combination.

The desiderata for future research on feeble-mindedness are above all the identification of unitary biological and psychological types, the transmission of which may be studied as such. Added to this the conjunction of hereditary feeble-mindedness and deformities, and other allied diseases must be examined. Agreement on the conceptions of the different grades of mental defect is urgently needed for a clear understanding of the transmission of the different grades. Any assessment of the success of eugenic measures should be based not on the question whether feeble-mindedness can thereby be entirely eradicated but rather what would be the incidence of mental deficiency after a given period without such measures.

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Modern Psychology in Practice. By W. Lindesay Neustatter, B.Sc., M.B., B.S., M.R.C.P. J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1937. pp. 299. 10/6.

Dr. Neustatter has managed to compress an enormous amount of information into this book, for he covers not only the psychoses and psychoneuroses of adults, but also the behaviour disorders in children, and many of the legal difficulties that these illnesses raise.

Dr. Neustatter discusses some of the old psychology as well as the more modern theories. References are to be found in his book to the more obscure difficulties which arise in psychiatric practice. When so much ground is covered it can readily be recognised that criticism on certain points is easy. Dr. Neustatter has managed to keep the balance extraordinarily well, and has added a useful bibliography to his text.

Some of the differences in the type of paragraph headings are a little difficult to understand. Every author has the right to make fresh classifications. The uses of some of them, however, are not readily discernible, as is his division of the endogenous