

## BOOK REVIEWS

KEMPF, EDWARD J. *Psychopathology*. St. Louis, C. V. Mosby Co., 1920. pp. 762.

"It is comparatively simple and very easy to be an extremist in anything, but it requires eternal care, sound common sense, and no little patience and endurance to maintain a progressively refining, healthfully constructive attitude toward the fundamental needs and pleasures of human nature." When the above statement appears as early as the third page of this recent contribution to psychopathological literature, the reader is inclined to assume a rather comfortable postural tonus and approach the volume with the expectation that perhaps at last has been found the long anticipated volume which is to safely point a course between the extremes of too rigid conservatism and too liberal psychoanalytic deductions. Surely a writer who voices the need of "eternal care" and "sound common sense" will not fail to heed his own warning. For the reader expecting a conservative interpretation of human adjustment, there is increasing disappointment. He will find here outlined, no medium course, but still another extreme contribution to psychopathological literature, which he must appraise and, after selection and rejection, weave into his own hypotheses.

Of one thing there can be no doubt. Kempf himself is sincerely convinced of his theory and is most eager to proselyte. In fact, his enthusiasm is so contagious that there is danger of uncritically accepting statements for which reason forces, if not rejection, at least serious question. In actual presentation of data, Kempf seems so anxious to get his view point before the public, that he takes no time to refine. As a result there is much to be criticized in his style. It is neither consistently popular nor consistently scientific. One finds tedious repetition, unnecessarily long and involved sentences, an occasional incomplete sentence and illustrations ad infinitum. It is to be regretted that "*Psychopathology*" is not presented with the fineness of expression of "*The Yellow Jacket*." Unkindly criticism might characterize Kempf's present style as he does his patients. "The large number of unique words which he used to express a simple thought was unusually impressive." (Page 436.) Again, "he used numerous polysyllabic words with little regard to their meaning." (Page 530.) It would indeed take a clever reader to grasp the meanings of "goodness" and "happiness" from a study of the wordy definitions on page 118. However, it is his coarseness of expression which can least be forgiven. Kempf himself calls attention (page 3) to the biological destructiveness of the tendencies to vulgarity and to prudishness. Certainly the way to overcome "prejudice, prudery, or mock finery" is not by actual coarseness of expression. The latter is quite unnecessary, however "delicate" the situation discussed.

To understand Kempf's dynamic, autonomic mechanism of the personality, one must appreciate first of all the tremendous emphasis placed upon the autonomic system. He assumes that "the different segments of the autonomic apparatus are stimulated to assume different types of postural tensions and activities, which give rise to an affective nervous stream, which, in turn, coordinates the projicient apparatus and compels it to act so as to expose the receptors of the

organism so that they will acquire certain types of stimuli and avoid others. The stimuli must be acquired in order to avoid prolonged unrest and distress, which may become decidedly malnutritional in their influence, must have the capacity to counter-stimulate the autonomic segment so that it will resume a state of comfortable tonus." (Pages 9-10) "Emotions and sentiments are cravings that have their origin in the tensions and movements of different autonomic (visceral) segments." (Page 6.) If emotions have a peripheral origin in the characteristic variation of the postural tensions or visceral segments, it is clear that at a given time, the individual, although he may be dominated by a distinct craving, nevertheless is never possessed by a single affective craving. Gradually the autonomic segments become conditioned to seek only such stimuli as are approved by the social group. Will becomes the wish for the esteem of the group. With the integration into a unity of these segmental cravings, together with one's strivings to win social esteem, there develops a personality, the Ego. Normally, of course, only appropriate stimuli would satisfy segmental cravings and so neutralize tension, but unfortunately, it is quite possible for the organism to become conditioned to demand less appropriate stimuli and thereby we have within a single personality the basis for possible conflict between segmental cravings and the striving for social esteem. Out of such conflict arise the mechanisms of suppression, repression, dissociation, and sublimation. In general, then, to Kempf behavior becomes largely a problem of supplying the maximum gratification with the minimum expenditure of energy for segmental cravings, at the same time preventing gratification at the expense of social esteem. Eccentric behavior becomes a compensation for perverted cravings. A segment denied reality must have a substitute. Delusions, hallucinations, and dreams, however bizarre, are but means of gratifying cravings which cannot be gratified by reality.

In appraising Kempf's theory two questions arise: First, what of the validity of the physiological data, the very foundation on which the psychological structure rests? Second, are we justified in considering the affect as purely autonomic in origin? For the physiological data, Kempf finds justification for his point of view largely in the work of Sherrington, Langelaan and Cannon. Even a casual reader might question the sweepingness of certain of Kempf's deductions from the findings of these men. Adequate criticism belongs to the neurologist or physiologist rather than psychologist. So far as the second question is concerned, does not Cannon himself raise the question whether organic changes are sufficiently differentiated in various emotions to account for the affective differences?

As regards Kempf's interpretation of behavior there is indeed much that is illuminating, particularly in his emphasis upon the importance of the Ego's attitude toward the cravings as determining whether his adjustment shall be one of submission, elimination, simulation or sublimation. Certainly such an explanation renders intelligible much that might seem utterly unintelligible, particularly in pathological behavior. Whereas by and large such mechanisms may be acceptable, there are times when the interpretation invites *reductio ad absurdum*. One may grant that Darwin may have had an inferiority complex and yet question whether it be necessary to assume that his use of a high stool in studying was to elevate himself above his fellows, thereby compensating for his feeling of inferiority. One may grant that a patient attempts to compensate for his impotence through the construction of a perpetual motion machine, and yet hesitate to see in invention in

general a compensation for the wastes of masturbation. One familiar with the number of objects on a psychopathic ward which would be available for swallowing, can hardly fail to feel the overemphasis on the swallowing of the ticking watch by the woman patient in simulation of pregnancy. Certainly an interpretive analysis of cases should be substituted for the older description of symptoms. Kempf's "Psychopathology" has been of no little value if it stimulates interest in case analyses. Whether one must ultimately approach all such analyses from the autonomic slant is another question.

As would be expected Kempf makes generous use of the psycho-analytical stock of symbols. In his case studies, their use is what might be expected from any thorough going analyst. However, his interpretation of the symbolic significance of various works of art, suggests that he can see only what he is looking for. For example, he cites Rodin's "Caryatid"—a woman's figure crouched beneath the weight of a burden resting on her shoulder. At once, Kempf sees in the bowl only the psychoanalytic symbol for the uterus, the shoulder is a convenient substitute, and the statue becomes symbolic of the "burdensome uterus and longing for maternity." It is interesting to question to what extent one is justified in reading an interpretation into another's creation. One might also raise the question whether the contemplation of this statue would afford relief from repressions of the type indicated. So far as the psychology of art is concerned, stone obviously from the inherent qualities of the substance itself is adapted to a representation of the type or symbolic rather than the individual or pictorial. But why must all that is symbolic be symbolic of libido at a crude organic level?

Certain it is that no one can contemplate Kempf's interpretations of the mechanisms of human adjustment without finding much that is illuminating and stimulating. Accepted in toto, however, it is legitimate to ask whether such a point of view is conducive to the development of that much to be desired "progressively refining, healthfully constructive attitude toward the fundamental needs and pleasures of human nature." Is an interpretation of life which sees the great driving forces of human behavior as purely organic, conducive to the development of a civilization that will survive? Regardless of its acceptability or rejection on purely emotional grounds, is it not clear that such an ideal would be biologically and ethically a regression? The ultimate test of course is pragmatic. Kempf freely criticizes the "biological castration influence of present American educational and social tendencies" but does not adequately outline a program for their reconstruction. Until he does, it is left to the imagination of the reader to reconstruct a social order in accordance with an ideal of an organic summum bonum. Such an attempt at reconstruction makes particularly clear the social and ethical implications of an autonomic ideal and protects against too uncritical acceptance.

The following books and pamphlets have been received:

- JAMES DREVER.—*The Psychology of Industry*. E. P. Dutton Co., New York, 1921. 148 pp.  
 ———. *The Psychology of Everyday Life*. E. P. Dutton Co., New York, 1920. 164 pp.  
 HENRY R. EVANS. *Educational Boards and Foundations, 1918-20*. Washington Govt Printing Office, 1921. 11 pp.  
 JULIA WADE ABBOT. *Kindergarten Education, 1918-20*. Washington Govt. Printing Office, 1921. 12 pp.

- Dr. A. A. ROBACK. *Roback Mentality Tests for Superior Adults*. Cambridge, Mass. 14 pp.
- JOHN J. B. MORGAN. *Morgan's Mental Test*. Psychopathic Hospital State University of Iowa. 8 pp.
- HELEN T. WOOLEY, Ph.D. and HORNELL HART. *Feeble-Minded Ex-School Children*. Studies from the Helen S. Trounstone Foundation, 25 East Ninth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio. April 1, 1921. 27 pp. Price 50 cents; 4 or more copies, 25 cents each; in set with 6 other studies \$1.00.
- H. R. BONNER. *Statistics of Universities, Colleges and Professional Schools, 1917-18*. Washington Gov't Printing Office, 1921. 223 pp.
- WM. R. HOOD. *State Laws Relating to Education*. Washington Gov't Printing Office, 1921. 231 pp.
- CHAS. S. MYERS. *Mind and Work*. C. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. The Knickerbocker Press, 1921. 175 pp.
- HARRY DEXTER KITSON, Ph.D. *The Mind of the Buyer*. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1921. 206 p.
- ALEXANDER INGLIS. *Inglis Intelligence Quotient Values*. World Book Co., Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York. 16 pp.