hook reviews.

... On October 14th "the effusion had almost disappeared, but was still visible." It is within the limits of possibility that all this happened exactly as described, but the writer unfortunately makes the impression that he is unintentionally exaggerating his therapeutic results.

Enough has been said to show that the observations contained in this little volume are marred by indications of excessive credulity or loose observation on the part of the author. The histories of remarkable therapeutic results in organic cases would certainly have come nearer to convincing us of their accuracy had the clinical conditions been minutely and scientifically described. Although the looseness of description which characterizes some of the histories detracts materially, in the reviewer's opinion, from the scientific value of the volume, it by no means destroys its interest. The book contains many observations which are probably truthful descriptions of the author's experience, and are well worth examination by those who are interested in determining the therapeutic value of hypnotism. It is just because the book contains so much that is interesting that we regret its shortcomings. The subject of hypnotism seems to attract especially persons of the artistic temperament, in whom the imagination often has undue sway. The writings of such persons, through their exaggerations, repel many sober-minded men, and thus the facts of hypnotism are being admitted more slowly by the medical public than might otherwise be the case. Krafft-Ebing in his recent "Psychiatrischen Arbeiten" shows how satisfactorily hypnotic observations may be presented by one who is a thoroughly trained observer. We still need in this field the mature and original judgment of men who have had long years of training in the methods of modern and scientific internal medicine.

The last quarter of the volume before us is devoted to medical letters on hypno-suggestion, etc., by the translator. These letters treat of hypnotic subjects in a general and rather diffuse manner, and can hardly be said to contain any information not already at our disposal. The section entitled, "Music, not Sermons in Insane Hospitals," elaborates a good idea, but unless the lyres of Orpheus are more tuneful than they usually are in public institutions, it may be questioned whether the frigid, grey-toned sermon is not the lesser of two evils. The translator's attitude toward thought transference and the starting up of "molecular action" in one brain by another is rather amusingly illustrated in the first letter. This does not detract from such general interest as his letters may possess, but it cannot fail to make us call in question, whether justly or unjustly, the accuracy of any personal views the writer may hold on the therapeutic value of hypnotism. The difficulty with the mental attitude of the man who firmly believes some things that have not been proved, is that he is at any moment liable to confound fact and fancy.

C. A. Hertler.


In this treatise of 298 pages, Dr. Preston has given a very full account of the protean manifestations of hysteria and of the various methods that have been suggested for the treatment of the disease.

The historical data collected in Chapter I., the review of the various theories regarding the etiology and pathology of the disease given in Chapter II., are well calculated to give the special student such facts as he needs before taking up the further study of this interesting
subject. In the remainder of the book the author has avowedly kept the needs of the general practitioner in mind rather than those of the specialist, and yet every specialist who reads carefully will find facts, though familiar, carefully stated and described in clear and concise language.

It is evident that the author has given the subject a great deal of special study, so that the book is not merely a summary of the writings of others. That he has largely reproduced the statements and even the illustrations of the French school is excusable, and in as much as little that is new could be added to the exhaustive studies made by Charcot and his followers, the author has on the whole acted wisely in adopting this conservative policy.

In the chapter on Differential Diagnosis we find a useful summary in parallel columns of the characteristic symptoms of epileptic and hysterical "spells." The difference between neurasthenia and hysteria is brought out very clearly, but we think the author underrates the difficulty of distinguishing between hypochondria in the female and hysteria. The former is a much more common affection than it is generally supposed to be.

It is a satisfaction to note that the author attaches very much more importance to the moral, hydrotherapeutic and general hygienic measures than to the treatment by drugs. His remarks on hypnotism are also to be commended for their brevity and sobriety. There are few books from which the general practitioner can get as readily the few salient points regarding hypnotism as he can from this monograph. We are in accord with the author in stating that the great value of hypnotism and the great service that it has done is that "it has taught us how to make our treatment of hysterical subjects suggestive." Furthermore, he is correct in stating that the successful treatment of hysteria consists not "in a suggestion now and then, as in the hypnotic state," but in continuous suggestion. It is far better to give the general practitioner this sober view of the matter than to praise indiscriminately the good effects of hypnotism and thus to encourage the practice of a questionable and not altogether harmless therapeutic method at the hands of the inexperienced.

Dr. Preston's book deserves to be read by the general practitioner who may be called upon to treat hysterical patients. But we commend it also to the specialist as a convenient work of reference on this perennially troublesome subject. B. Sachs.


Much of what the volume contains has already been published during the last ten years in various medical journals. The subject is one that has always proved of interest and about which many a wordy battle has been waged.

To many the claims made by Ranney for graduated tenotomy in the various conditions comprised under the collective term "heterophoria" will appear to be far-fetched, and the cures by him in chronic chorea, epilepsy, insomnia, and even insanity will seem to be no less than almost marvelous.

It is to be regretted that Dr. Ranney has not published the statistics of all of his heterophoric cases, including the failures as well as the cures. That he must have had many failures is evident when he