

Book Reviews

DISEASE OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM RESULTING FROM ACCIDENT AND INJURY.
By Pearce Bailey, A.M., M.D. D. Appleton & Co., New York and London.

This book, which is practically a second edition of "Accident and Injury, Their Relations to Diseases of the Nervous System," has been brought down to date and very capably enlarged and revised.

It has been lately rather harshly criticized because it only touched briefly upon themes which the critic considered deserved long and minute treatment.

We take issue with such a criticism in the case for several reasons. In the first place, if there be any virtue in a single volume of some six hundred pages on a general subject, it lies in the fact that it not only classifies the subject matter, but gives concisely the most generally accepted opinion as to etiology, pathology, etc., without burdening one with every theory held by the myriad of observers each one of whom together with a considerable following proves himself right at the same time as he proves all the rest of the world wrong. This method of treatment may seem *ex cathedra* to one who gets any satisfaction from wading through dreary wastes of conflicting testimony, but to the general medical man, to whom, we take it, the book in question is addressed, it is not only clarifying but relieving.

Let us take, for instance, the part in the introduction anent the subject of blood pressure. The increase in arterial tension is dismissed with very few words but not in a way to belittle its significance. Now the subject of arterio-sclerosis in all its grades is one of the most demanding and important interest, yet it cannot be otherwise than briefly treated in a book of this nature.

The subject of fracture-dislocations of the spine is treated in two brief chapters, yet is this part of the book, excellent in its conciseness, to be condemned because it does not reach the great magnitude of the monograph by Wagner and Stolper?

The book is divided into two large subdivisions: "Part I, Organic effects of injury to the nervous system;" "Part II, Functional effects of injury—the nervous disorders which most frequently follow railway and allied accidents—the traumatic neuroses."

A rather doubtful gain over the first edition is the printing of the bibliography at the end of the book, instead of having the references of each chapter immediately follow it. The bibliography is very rich and has been brought down to 1906.

It is a very excellent work of its kind, which is that to which the general medical man must turn for instructions and guidance.

There are two species of medical writing: the text-book on a more or less general subject and the exhaustive monograph along one particular line. The former is not the place for the discussion *ad nauseam* of a thousand and one theories, but the latter may well take up a careful consideration of its bibliography, and the more analytical thought brought to bear on the different opinions the better. But the critic who can make no distinction between these two widely separated classes, and who insists in charging up as a shortcoming the absence of a characteristic not rightly belonging to the class in question is singularly obtuse or truculent.

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