The classification of heart disease originated by the Heart Committee of the Tuberculosis and Health Association of New York and approved by the American Heart Association, is divided into four groups and these are designated \(\text{\AE}\)tiological, Anatomical, and Physiological diagnosis, and Functional capacity; this classification forms the basis of nomenclature for the book.

\(\text{\AE}\)tiological diagnosis includes all the basic diseases, if you can call them so, which are commonly followed by heart disease.

Anatomical diagnosis includes all the various parts of the cardiac apparatus with the disasters which may befall them, and physiological diagnosis includes all the various types of disorders of rhythm, with the addition of the Stokes-Adams and anginal syndromes, and incompetency of the various valves.

Function capacity is divided into three stages according to the amount of work which the patient can do.

It would perhaps have been simpler if "Anatomical diagnosis" had been labelled "Structural damage" and "Physiological diagnosis" had been labelled "Resultant abnormalities of function."

"Clinical concepts of the arrhythmias" the second chapter has probably been added to make the book complete, but it is very difficult to deal with this subject in four and a half pages and it would have probably been better to omit it.

The electrocardiograph is described and the simple electrical laws of muscular contraction. For nearly all the disorders of rhythm there is a special diagram of the heart with a sample lead underneath to illustrate the mechanism involved.

In spite of all the obvious trouble that has been taken it is doubtful whether the explanations given will be clear to the beginner, and it is evidently for him that the book is written. It might have been better to have magnified one complex from each tracing and shown that in a small inset with the waves lettered, as it is many of the tracings have no interest for the cardiologist, but are nevertheless not easily understandable by the novice.

Some of the captions are not written with proper care, for instance "an isoelectric T wave" is a frank impossibility, the T wave is due to a change of potential and if there is no change there is no "wave."

A complicated method of computing "axis deviation" is described which necessitates three electrocardiographs being simultaneously attached to a patient, but there is little value in attaching detailed, complicated and unproved material to a book which is written for beginners.

Too much importance should not be attached to these points, however, for the general conception of the book, its layout, and its plan are really excellent. Enormous trouble has been taken to make sure that each tracing represents accurately the condition it is intended to portray, and the book will serve admirably the purpose which Dr. Maher had in mind when he wrote it.

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**HISTORICAL NOTES ON PSYCHIATRY.**


An account of mental disorder considered from the angle of historical research cannot fail to interest. True, there always exists a minority of medical men, who are out of patience with any "harking-back" to the past, as a line of investigation. To such Dr. Whitwell's book will be devoid of meaning. Nevertheless, to those physicians, psychiatrists and others who feel that a study of the foundations of our knowledge can contribute something of value, this little work will appeal. An important section of the book is made up of translated excerpts from the works of various classical and mediaeval writers, dealing with mental affections.

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**CIVILIZATION AND DISEASE.**


Dr. Donnison's thesis is that much of the disease to which civilized man is subject is due to his inability to accommodate himself to his most complex environment. In support of this view he contrasts, in the first place, the maladies that afflict primitive man, of whom he has had a large experience in Africa, with those that are met with in the case of his civilized brother.
Dr. Donnison has noted that not only are certain types of so-called organic disease, as e.g., hyperpiesis, diabetes mellitus, Graves’ disease and peptic ulcer, but also the so-called functional diseases such as the psycho-neuroses, common in civilized communities, whereas they are conspicuous by their absence among primitive races. He sees the endocrine and autonomic nervous system as the association between these apparently different kinds of malady and much of his discussion is taken up with the interrelationship between these organs and psychological factors. While he must himself admit that many of his arguments are speculative, they are none the less interesting, and at the present stage of thought on disease in its broadest sense are specially worth consideration.

PHYSIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY
OF THE BILE.


The enormous growth of the literature on any branch of science has made it difficult even for a specialist to keep abreast of the advances in his own field. For the many workers, especially teachers, whose scope is at all general, it is practically impossible. This seems particularly unfortunate when we realise that the real kernel of most original papers need occupy relatively little space, and that the rest is largely recapitulation and sometimes mere verbiage. There would appear to be only two practicable solutions: a rigorous pruning of original papers by the editors of journals, and an attempt, periodically, to publish the essentials of a large literature in the form of a critical monograph.

This latter is what Mr. Sobotka has done. The present volume is a condensation of about eleven hundred books and papers, and gives a survey of present knowledge on the secretion of bile, its nature and its modifications by chologogues, and of the normal constituents of the bile with the exception of bilirubin and the lipoids. The latter are being dealt with in a companion volume, which will cover at least as vast a literature as the present one. Such a condensation is invaluable: it may safely be said that this book will be the “Prolegomena to every future study of the bile acids”, and it is of interest to others besides the specialised bio-chemist. The relationships of vitamin D, the sex hormones, the cardiac glucosides and the carcinogenic substances to the bile acids and cholesterol have made it important that most clinical and laboratory workers should know more about these substances than has hitherto been necessary.

What we want is more books like this, and on every branch of medicine; and criticism may seem unworthy, especially as this book is, on the whole, very good. Nevertheless, the writer of such a book is under a very great responsibility; he is short-cutting the original papers of hundreds of workers, and it is essential that his short cut should lead us aright. It is greatly to his credit that he possesses an admirable impartiality: there is no hint of a bias, conscious or unconscious, towards one side or another on controversial questions. But it is surely wrong to omit any reference to the excellent work of Councillor and Macindoe and yet include a paragraph (although a good one) on the miserable mistakes of Sweet, Bland and others.

The view of Aschoff on the excretion of cholesterol by the wall of the gall-bladder are somewhat misrepresented, and indeed I cannot find his name in the bibliographical index. The literature on calcium in the bile is rather too incomplete, and there is surely more to be said about the copper content of pigment stones than is to be found on page 99. Indeed, the whole subject of gall-stones is dismissed in four pages, when it might have been given a volume equal to that of the whole book. But the section ends with a quotation: “It is not quite clear to me why the problem of gall-stone formation should cause so much concern to pathologists and clinicians, etc.” This is the laboratory worker’s outlook with a vengeance! From the point of view of the laboratory worker himself, it is a pity that there is no critical discussion of the methods of bile-acid estimation, one of the first points a reader would look for. In other words, their synopsis of the literature needs to be supplemented by a little judicious reading of original papers. Perhaps that is inevitable, and the main point is that we have, in this volume, something which is badly wanted, and something which may encourage others to do likewise in other fields.