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MEDICAL MORPHOLOGY.

Morphologie Médicale: Étude des quatre types humains. Applications à la clinique et à la thérapeutique, par A. Chaillon and L. Mac-Auliffe. Pp. iv+248. (Paris: Octave Doin et Fils, 1912.) Price 5 francs.

THE title of "Morphologie Médicale," which the distinguished French authors have given to their book, did at first suggest to the reviewer that he was to have the pleasure of making a new subject of research known to the readers of NATURE. The subject, however, is not a new but a very old one, for in its essential nature "morphologie médicale" is really a resuscitation of the old doctrine of "constitutions" or "temperaments," which was so beloved by physicians who lived before the days of Pasteur and Lister. The names are changed with the times; certain "physical types," not "constitutions," are recognised. The exact methods of the anthropologist are employed to distinguish one type from the other.

Patients in the clinics, according to our authors, can be classified into four types:—the respiratory, the digestive, the muscular, the cerebral. The names at once suggest the underlying characteristic of each type: in the first the respiratory is the dominant system of the body; in the second the digestive, and so on. The head offers certain features which assist the clinician to recognise these types. Two transverse lines are drawn across the face—one at the root of the nose, the other at the junction of the nose and upper lip. The zone between these two lines, containing the nose, is the respiratory zone; the segment above—the forehead and vertex of the head—represents the cerebral zone; the one below, comprising the mouth and chin, belongs to the digestive zone. The predominance in size of any of these three zones of the head helps to indicate the type to which the individual belongs.

Similarly as regards the trunk; if the thoracic part is relatively long, the individual is of the respiratory type; if the abdomen is unduly developed, then, of course, the patient is of the "digestive" type. The muscular type is represented by gymnasts and athletes with brawny limbs. It is strange that the authors cite the great Napoleon as an example of this type, and Edison as a representative of the cerebral type. Rossini, the composer, is their selected example of the "digestive" type, and Spinoza of the "respiratory."

The classification seems altogether unscientific
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and really unworkable, but at the same time one must confess that such types are clearly recognisable from the descriptions given by the authors. If the members of our Cabinet were to visit Paris and enter a clinique where this doctrine of type is put in practice, there could be no doubt as to which type some of the Ministers belong. The War Office would provide an excellent example of the digestive type; the Admiralty a representative specimen of the "cerebral"; the Foreign Office of the "respiratory"; and the head of the Local Government Board could stand as a fair example of the "short muscular" type. The difficulties arise when we come to the others; the Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot be fitted in anywhere; nor the Premier, nor the Home Secretary, and so with the others. The authors confess that the types are apt to be mixed. Indeed, it is not too much to say that 60 to 70 per cent. of men and women are so ill suited to fit the classification proposed that no two physicians or anthropologists would likely agree as to the types to which this great indeterminable class should be assigned.

In this work there are all the defects which were inherent in the work of Lavater and of Gall and Spruzheim. Yet for two things anthropologists will be indebted to MM. Chaillon and Mac-Auliffe: first for a very clear exposition of the manner in which they make their measurements; second, for the tables which include their anthropological data. In our opinion, the anthropological researches which have been carried out in connection with our hospitals are more satisfactory in method and in aim than those of the French authors. Two of these may be cited: the inquiry which Dr. Shrub-sall made several years ago on the out-patients of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and the research published in a recent number of *Biometrika* by Dr. David Macdonald. In both these papers the biometrical methods were employed to ascertain if there was any co-relationship between anthropological type and disease. The results obtained suggested there was such a relationship, and one which was capable of exact mathematical expression.

A. K.

HISTORY OF DETERMINANTS.

The Theory of Determinants in the Historical Order of Development. By Dr. T. Muir, C.M.G., F.R.S. Vol. ii.: The Period 1841 to 1860. Pp. xvi+475. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1911.) Price 17s. net.

THE period covered by this volume is a very important one; it practically settled the notation, and, owing mainly to the rise of the calculus of forms, it brought into prominence

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