

**NERVOUS AND MENTAL
DISEASE
MONOGRAPH SERIES NO.
8; MENTAL MECHANISMS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649536689

Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph Series No. 8; Mental Mechanisms by William A. White

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WILLIAM A. WHITE

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NERVOUS AND MENTAL DISEASE
MONOGRAPH SERIES

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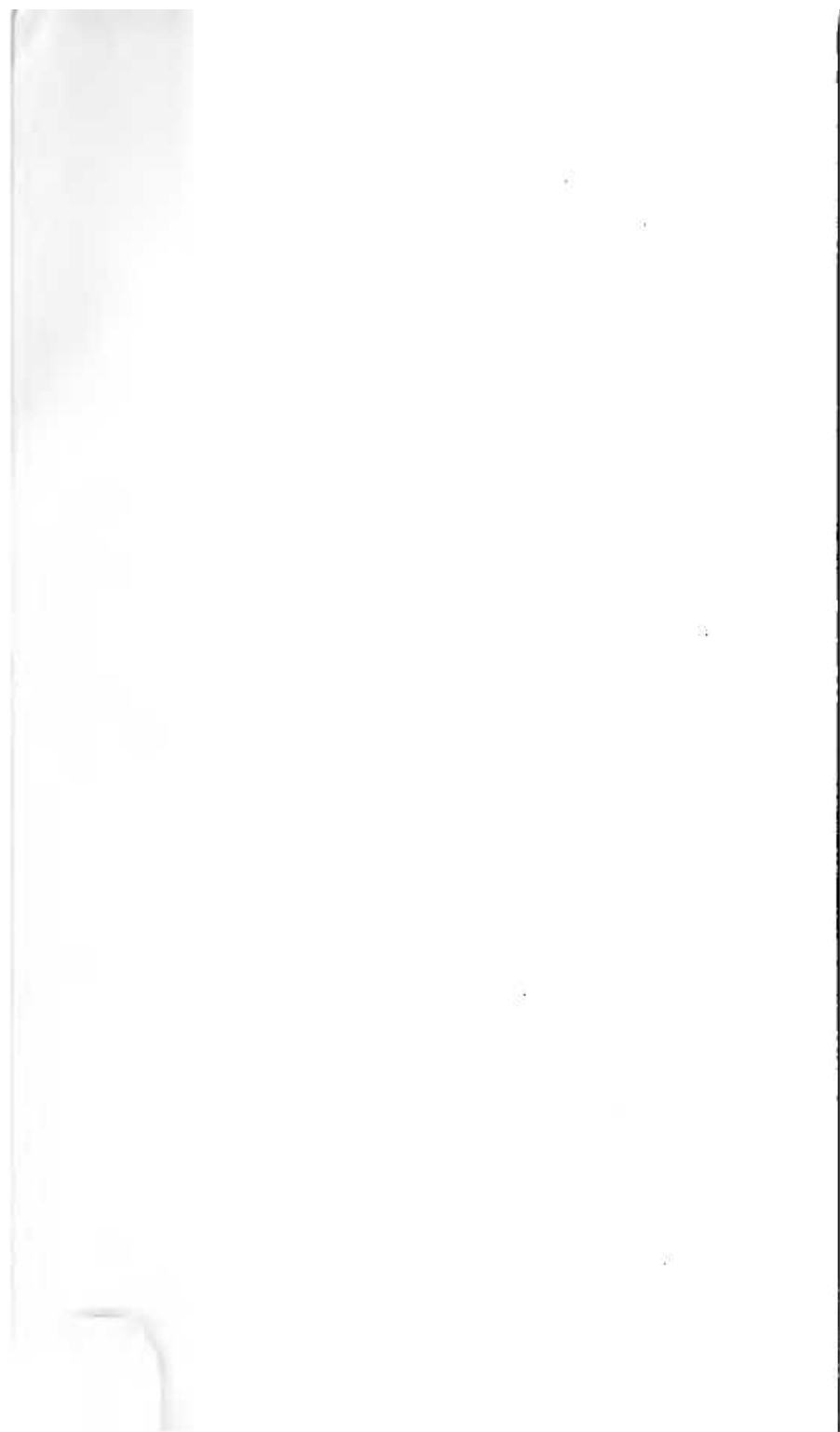
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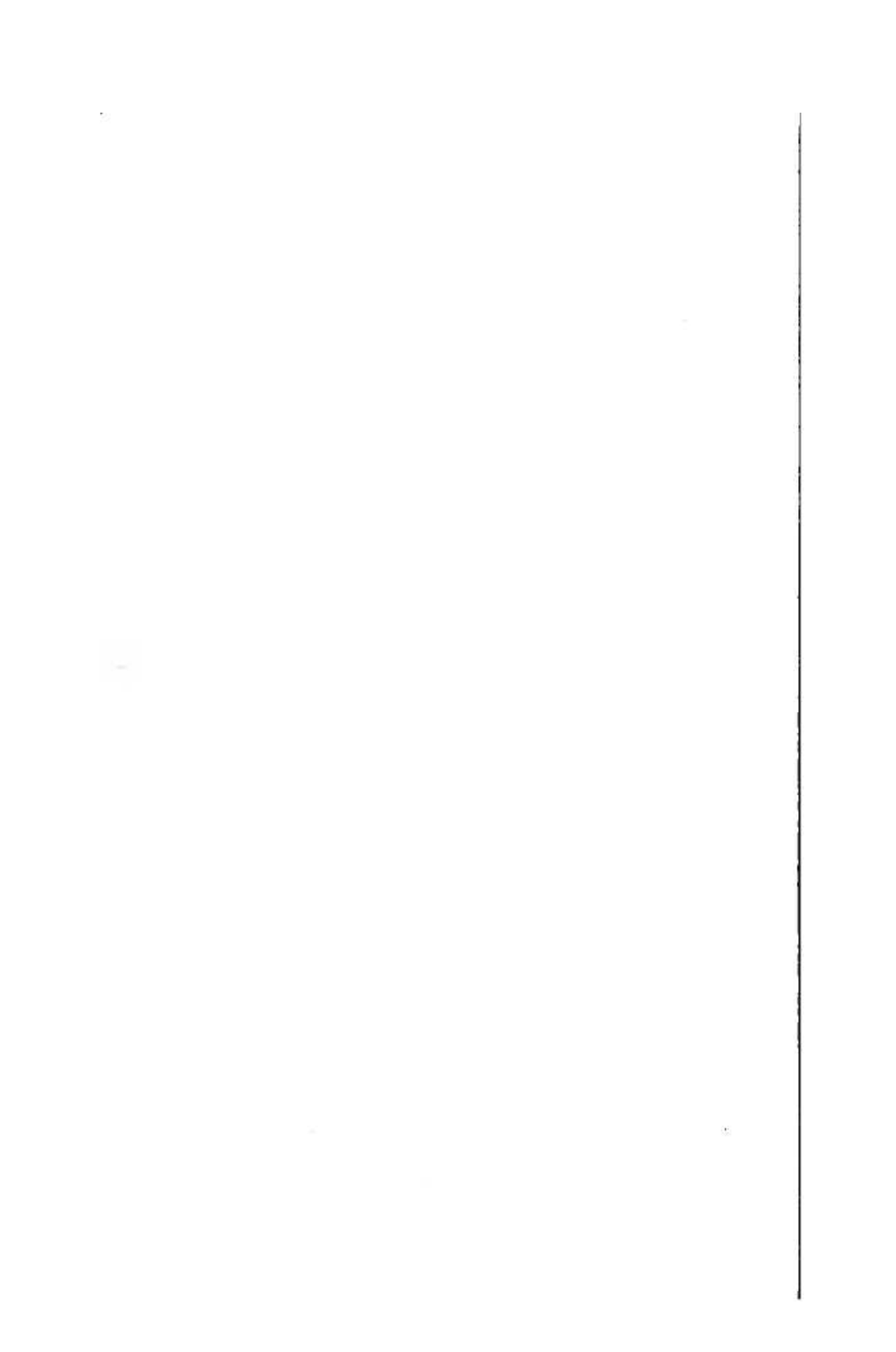


PREFACE

The teacher becomes naturally the writer of books. Every man who tries to teach a subject inevitably comes to express himself in a way different from other teachers of the same subject, and different from the text-books. He is sure, sooner or later, to feel the need of a book as a medium of his own individual manner of expression. As the "Outlines of Psychiatry" (No. 1 of this series) came into existence as the result of a need which grew out of my teaching in the medical colleges, so this work is the result of a need growing out of my efforts to present certain principles in the field of psychopathology to the younger members of my staff. I trust it may find a wider usefulness in other similar institutions.

W. A. W.

GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE,
WASHINGTON, D. C.
June 15, 1911.



INTRODUCTION

A few words only by way of introduction so that the reader may be assisted to an understanding of the plan of this book. It is always helpful to get a bird's-eye view of a city one is about to explore, or to look at a field under the microscope first with a low-power objective, for purposes of general orientation, before examining the minute details with a lens of higher magnification.

In the first place the book does not pretend to an exhaustive setting forth of all the principles underlying psychopathology, but only to an explanation and emphasis of certain fundamentals which appear to me absolutely essential to an understanding of the problems of present-day psychiatry.

The first chapter is devoted to a consideration of the building up of the structure of consciousness, the organization and operation of the forces at work and somewhat of the laws of their interplay. The second chapter accounts, in a general way, for the content of consciousness, the nature of that content, and gives a general account of certain types of reaction. The third chapter deals somewhat more specifically with the content of consciousness as illustrated by dreams, the content of the psychoses, and certain phenomena of the content of the race consciousness—folklore. The fourth chapter is devoted to a definition of the complex and an explanation of its effects both in the normal mind and in the psychoses. Chapter five carries out the principles elucidated in the preceding chapters in the setting forth of the problem of hysteria, while in chapter six the principles are applied to an explanation of the problem of art, both from the standpoint of the creation of art and the nature of its appeal. Chapter seven sets forth the methods by which, in accordance with the principles thus far laid down, it is possible to attain to a knowledge of the content of consciousness, and discusses certain therapeutic issues; while the final chapter, chapter eight, is a general discussion of the bearing of all that precedes upon the problems of preventive medicine, with some suggestions as to methods of procedure.

