On the occasion of the publication of Emil Kraepelin's memoirs about 57 years after his death, we would like to make some remarks on the development of this book. In addition we would like to point out how this autobiographical text can help to understand the personality and the work of Kraepelin in a better way.

Kraepelin wrote his memoirs in the years before 1919 and originally did not intend to publish them. Therefore the text was only known to his relatives, close collaborators and friends. In 1976 a commemoration on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Kraepelin's death took place in Munich. Then the relatives who were present at the commemoration gave their assent to publication.

The partly inconsistent orthography and punctuation were adjusted; we added an appendix to the text comprising short biographical facts concerning the persons mentioned by Kraepelin in his memoirs. By this we hope to provide more information and to demonstrate some historical correlations. Not all of the nearly 500 names mentioned by Kraepelin can be found in this list of short biographies, because some are so well-known that an annotation seemed to be unnecessary, or no reliable information could be found. A bibliography and a number of illustrations complete the book.

In his memoirs Kraepelin depicts his childhood and school-days rather briefly. In this connection two persons are predominant: his father, Karl Kraepelin (1817-1882),
who was a music teacher, vocalist and reciter of contemporary literature, and his brother Karl (1848-1915), who was 8 years older and who, as Kraepelin himself remarks, "had a very strong influence on me especially concerning his great inclination towards the natural sciences."

Kraepelin's interest in botany - and especially in systematics - was decidedly formed by the example of his brother, who was director of the Museum of Natural History in Hamburg from 1889 to 1914.

In 1874 Kraepelin registered at the University of Leipzig as a student of medicine, but already one year later he went to the University of Wuerzburg. During his description of the first months in Wuerzburg the name of Wilhelm Wundt is mentioned for the first time. Wundt was to be of great importance to Kraepelin's further scientific career. It is not quite clear whether Kraepelin concerned himself with the philosophical works of Wundt in detail. But nevertheless it is obvious that Kraepelin was greatly influenced by Wundt's definition of psychology. In philosophical terms, Wundt was a realist, and in his psychological works he did not inquire into the character or the nature of the soul, but demanded an experimental approach to psychological research. This of course implied that the method of introspection could no longer be regarded as a scientific method of equal standing.

On the other hand - and this is important for the understanding of Kraepelin's works, too - Wundt must not be simply identified with the theory of association psychology, since he often discussed the question of unity of psychical experience and pointed out the importance of what he called "apperception". By this term Wundt postulated a psychic process on a higher level than pure association.

Kraepelin himself never denied Wundt's great influence on him; on the contrary, he often mentions his name and emphasizes his effort to stay in contact with Wundt. In 1918 he visited Wundt in Heidelberg, who at that time was 86 years old, and described his activity and vigour.

In 1878 Kraepelin became an assistant of Bernhard von Gudden at the state hospital in Munich, which no longer exists today. His description of every-day life in this hospital is very impressive: he deplores the helplessness in dealing with psychotic patients and the lack of effective therapeutical methods. His own interest becomes clear when he mentions "the perplexity concerning all these manifestations of mental illness, which could