LIVING WITH MYASTHENIA GRAVIS By Jean Welch Kempton. (Pp. 90; illustrated; \$6.95.) Thomas: Springfield, Ill. 1971.

An extremely well-produced, illustrated, and easy to read book by an authoress who not only is a sufferer, but also has travelled and read widely, and presents this mysterious disease in a compassionate, sympathetic, and realistic light.

Produced essentially for the patient, it may be read with benefit by the medical practitioner as well as the patient's family and friends. It stresses the mentality of the patient and how essential it is for the patient to accept the disease, and to learn to live with it. The known facts and drugs are discussed in simple lay terms and guidance given in the day-to-day management.

A good reference list and an appendix summarizing the history, clinical types, symptomatology and further selected reading complete an excellent addition to the treatment of myasthenia.

The authoress also briefly traces the history of the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation Inc. of America and it is perhaps pertinent to mention that an active Myasthenia Gravis Committee under the aegis of the Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain exists in the United Kingdom.

M. J. LANGE

PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE By D. Curran, M. Partridge, and P. Storey. (Pp. 438; illustrated; £2.50.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1971.

This introduction to psychiatry is in its seventh edition having evolved from the original text by Curran and Guttmann which first appeared in 1943. Teachers of psychiatry owe a debt of gratitude to those of their colleagues who are courageous enough to interpret for the benefit of beginners the complexities and subtleties of their subject. In their quest for clarification the authors of this book err at times towards oversimplification by sacrificing stubborn facts for the sake of alluring precepts. For example, the following statement will undoubtedly appeal to the student, anxious to find a solid base from where to advance when deciding on a choice of treatment:

'As regards treatment, the more the illness appears a specific one, whether organic, schizophrenic, or manic-depressive, the greater is the likelihood of some physical treatment being required. The more the condition seems to arise from attitudes of mind as part of a personality difficulty, the more will psychological management and psychotherapy be required.'

In its stark nakedness and unrefined by the necessary qualifications, this kind of generalization may lead the student to forget that therapeutic

endeavours should always be tailored to the needs of individual patients. Yet, broad guide-lines are in order when amplified by further explanation. Less defensible is the following somewhat chancy approach to diagnosis: 'In the differential diagnosis (of schizophrenia) from hysteria, a fair rule is that where there is reasonable ground for doubt, the case is one of schizophrenia.'

Such a rule of thumb would seem to provide little incentive for the serious student to grapple with the difficult concepts underlying the various diagnostic categories in psychiatry. When it comes to the presentation of more factual material, however, this book is informative, clear and well-balanced, even if the authors cannot resist taunting psychoanalysts for their theories and claims. There are particularly good sections on the organic mental disorders, sexual anomalies and the legal aspects of mental illness, as well as up-to-date commentaries on trends in the organization of the mental health services. This book can be recommended to seriously motivated medical students who have the opportunity of testing what they read by constant reference to the clinical facts of real-life psychiatry.

G. F. M. RUSSELL

BOOKS RECEIVED

A HISTORY OF DRUGS. By Lydia Mez-Mangoni. (Pp. 175; illustrated; price not stated.) F. Hoffmann-La Roche: Basle. 1971.

SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR. By J. Wallace McCulloch and Alistair E. Philip. (Pp. 123; £2.50.) Pergamon: Oxford. 1972.

A GUIDE TO PSYCHIATRIC BOOKS (in English). By Karl Menninger. (Pp. 238; \$11.50.) Grune and Stratton: New York. 1972.

PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC TECHNIQUES IN MEDICINE. By Michael and Enid Balint. (Pp. 236; £1.25.) Tavistock Publications: London. 1972.

SCHÄDIGUNGEN AM PERIPHEREN NERVENSYSTEM DURCH IONISIERENDE STRAHLEN. By Hans Spiess. (Pp. 71; illustrated; \$11.90.) Springer: Berlin. 1972.

DIE HASCHISCHOSUCHT. By M. G. Stringaris. (Pp. 150; \$4.50.) Springer: Berlin. 1972.

DIE BLUTVERSORGUNG DES RÜCKENMARKES UND IHRE KLINISCHE RELEVANZ. By Kurt Pisco. (Pp. 91; illustrated; \$15.) Springer: Berlin. 1972.

ACUPUNCTURE: The Ancient Chinese Art of Healing. By Felix Mann. (Pp. 226; illustrated; £3.10.) Heinemann: London. 1972.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AND ME. By M. H. Greenblatt. (Pp. 74; illustrated; \$5.75.) Thomas: Springfield. 1972.

THE THERAPY OF POETRY. By M. Harrower. (Pp. 117; \$4.75.) Thomas: Springfield. 1972.