from the subject dealt with in this book. Clinical psychology (referred to throughout, rather familiarly, as “kipsy”) is concerned with “all kinds of mental conduct in bodily disorders”: it has nothing to do with mental illness, and very little to do with the use of psychological procedures for investigating the diagnosis or causes of disease. Dr. Witte’s chapter on psychodiagnostic methods suffers from lack of familiarity with the vigorous growth of this field of applied psychology in the English-speaking countries during the last decade. In the body of the book Professor Hellpach develops his concept of a series of “psychomas” that accompany physical states such as hunger, exhaustion, tuberculosis, typhoid, sepsis and all the rest. These psychomas are transient epiphenomena of the somatic process, he says. The notion is unacceptable, since, as expounded, it lacks precision and logical consistency. The book as a whole is idiosyncratic in—language and outlook, and Professor Hellpach’s rather eccentric standpoint is not likely to appeal to physicians.


The literary skill and the candour of this book, which is partly autobiographical, counteract the tedium induced by its lack of form. It is instructive to learn how Dr. Reik’s mind works when he is psychoanalysing somebody: but we discover, as we read on, that some other psychoanalysts do it differently. He has large funds of disapproval for psychiatrists (he is a non-medical psychoanalyst) and is rather out of sympathy with many of the younger Freudians, especially when they use what he calls “psychoanalese” with slick assurance. His theme is the intuitive understanding, the native psychological perspicacity which the psychoanalyst should possess and constantly use if he is to be successful in his therapy: otherwise he becomes an “interpreting automaton”. The book discloses a strongly marked personality and an artistic approach to the problem of human motives and conduct, incongruously allied with a tendency to anatomize and elaborate some rather simple matters (like the cartoon from Punch which is reproduced in Chapter XXIV). In contrast to many pretentious and stilted accounts of psychoanalytic procedure, this book discloses the inevitably personal, subjective and in many ways fortuitous character of the analyst’s intervention.


Dr. Reik, who is a slightly unconventional Freudian psychopathologist, asks himself why men sometimes strive for objects that entail physical and mental distress, voluntarily submitting to privations, sacrifices, and shame in spite of their customary avoidance of pain. Moralists and philosophers have tackled this problem before, but they have not related it so centrally to the sexual aberration called masochism. Dr. Reik arrives, after a lengthy and discursive journey through the problem, at the conclusion that the masochist aims at pleasure but is driven by anxiety and guilt to take up a defiant attitude, and so follows a perverse road to the attainment of his object. The book is a long essay in psychoanalytic speculation, and has no scientific pretensions.


Professor Scheele has written a series of 12 essays on the many ways in which patients can be affected by anxiety, and of the duties of the doctor in relation to them. Thus there are essays on the physiological effects of disagreeable emotions, on the anxiety the patient is likely to suffer during investigation, during treatment or before admission to hospital, at the prospect of disfigurement or maiming, the fear of death. The book is of general medical interest, and not specially noteworthy for the psychiatrist, but it is informed by a simple clarity and wisdom which should commend it.


This is a useful compendium for general readers. It contains a straightforward account of what mental deficiency is, illustrated by a few case-records, with notes on the genetic, cultural, material, physical, educational, and emotional determinants of the situation that physicians are confronted with in a mentally defective person brought to them for treatment or advice. Dr. Kanner pleads for invigoration and extension of the prevailing system for coping with mental deficiency in the United States.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(Review in a later issue is not precluded by notice here of books recently received.)


THE FEBRUARY (1951) ISSUE

The February (1951) issue contains the following papers:


Observations on the Passage of Weed's Prussian Blue Mixture along the Axis Cylinders and Inter-Fibre Fluid of Nerves. By E. J. Field.


Disability Caused by Brain Wounds. By W. Ritchie Russell.


An Investigation into the Effects of Glutamic Acid on Human Intelligence. By J. R. Miliken and J. L. Standen.

A number of copies are still available and may be obtained from the Publishing Manager, British Medical Association, Tavistock Square, W.C.1., price 7s. 6d.