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appear to come. Amongst conditions mentioned in which it may prove useful, are allergic reactions, cardiac arrhythmias due to direct cardiac irritation at operation, and a variety of painful lesions including the acute phase of anterior polioyelitis and post-traumatic pain states. The method as detailed in the book appears to be safe, and is likely to have a wide application in painful conditions of doubtful aetiology which do not respond adequately to routine analgesics. Its vasodilator effect may also prove widely useful in thrombotic and spastic conditions.


This book draws attention to the difficult problem of managing old people who are incontinent. It includes a study of bladder physiology, and demonstrates the true small capacity which these patients often have. The author finds that incontinence may be brought on by insufficient nursing attention to a bedridden patient: once a patient becomes incontinent he is apt to be left out of the bed pan round, so that no attempt is made to re-train what is lost. The author holds out little hope for increasing the capacity of the bladder in these cases, and yet this seems to be worth further study.

It is also maintained that the bladder becomes spastic in spastic paralysis. It seems likely, however, that diminished capacity in these cases may be due more to a reaction to a period of retention and infection than to any direct effect of long tract disease. For the worst cases, the author has been experimenting with a plaster bed from which the excreta fall into a receptacle. It is hard, however, to believe that this will not cause more difficulties than it will cure. However, though the author's views on treatment are sometimes not very imaginative, this book will be useful to geriatric units and others dealing with the problem. The book is extravagantly produced, and is therefore much too expensive for a work of this kind.


This is a symposium with articles written mainly by acknowledged authorities on the subjects treated. Of the 14 articles, eight (zoology, genetics, general medicine, social medicine, neurology, psychology, social anthropology and sociology) deal with aspects of biological science, using the term in its widest sense, and three of these deal directly with sociological problems, while a sociological viewpoint forms an important part of a further three (genetics, general medicine and psychology). This is probably a fair representation of the growing realization in this century of the importance of man's reactions to his fellow men.

The aim of this work is presumably to present to the intelligent amateur both the achievements and the trends of scientific thought which distinguish our times. It is difficult to use the symposium method as a means to this end: to be successful, contributions must be strung together like beads in a necklace. In this volume most of the beads are admirable in themselves, but the string is largely absent. The article on genetics by Dr. Ford, and on zoology by Professor Medawar certainly succeed in combining facts and viewpoints, while Professor R. A. Fisher's article on statistics, a development which probably gives a more distinctive twentieth century flavour to science than any other, is somehow disappointing. The article on neurology is a misnomer, for the data discussed in it are almost exclusively psychiatric.

The tendency of science at the moment seems to be towards a fragmentation of knowledge, and this book, with its informative but rather isolated essays, is representative of this tendency. However, its publication is also a recognition of the need for integration and synthesis which has been increasingly expressed in the last decade.

BOOKS RECEIVED

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


Co-ordinating Committee on Abstracting and Indexing in the Medical and Biological Sciences. 1951. France: UNESCO. Pp. 92. Price 5s.


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THE NOVEMBER (1951) ISSUE

The November (1951) issue contains the following papers:

Hereditary Sensory Radicular Neuropathy. By D. Denny-Brown.
Calcification of the Corpus Striatum and Dentate Nuclei Occurring in a Family. By J. Foley.
The Centripetal Pathway from the Bladder and Urethra within the Spinal Cord. By P. W. Nathan and Marion C. Smith.
The Localization of Some Acid Phosphatases in Brain Tissue. By D. Naidoo and O. E. Pratt.
Anomalous Horizontal Lamination of Nerve Cells in the Supragranular Cortex of an Idiot Brain. By M. C. H, Dodgson.
The Diffusion of Substances in the Subarachnoid Spaces. By G. B. Belloni.
Perceptual Patterns during Recovery from General Anaesthesia. By Joseph Jaffe and Morris B. Bender.

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.