BOOK REVIEWS


It is difficult for anyone engaged in the close study of a branch of medicine to find time to read exhaustively in other fields of knowledge, and this book offers in a small space an account of fundamental advances in a variety of fields. It is a selection from a series of lectures given in the winter of 1951-52, and there can be no doubt of the wide range of the subjects with which it deals. For those who have previously been daunted by the complications involved in the physiology of vision or the coagulation of the blood, there are chapters clearly and authoritatively describing the present position. Many readers will find themselves on more familiar ground in the chapter dealing with current clinical problems such as A.C.T.H. and blood pressure, but among the most interesting sections are those on subjects hardly dealt with at all in medical textbooks, and of these the chapter on "Growth in Adolescence" stands out.

This excellent book deserves to be widely read, and it will be a misfortune if it suffers the fate of many collected lectures, and by appealing to all is read by few.


Stereoencephalotomy has proved a valuable research weapon in animal neurophysiology and in recent years the authors have been exploring its clinical possibilities. In this first volume they present the methods employed and have prepared a stereotaxic atlas of the human brain based on a study of 30 specimens. The atlas is beautifully produced and the apparatus employed is clearly described. One of the major early difficulties was the impossibility of using skull landmarks as fixed reference points, due to the variability of the human skull. The stereotaxic atlas has been based, therefore, on intracerebral reference points, either the calcified pineal gland when this was visible in radiographs, or the position of the posterior commissure deduced from pneumoencephalography. It was found that this latter method was essential when a very small intracerebral lesion had to be produced.

It is clear that the authors have gone far in producing a method whereby focal intracerebral lesions can be produced, and neuroanatomists and neurophysiologists will be especially grateful for this volume and the fresh facets which the work illuminates. The possibilities of its use in psychosurgery, in the relief of pain and in involuntary movements are also apparent, and the clinical volume on this subject will be awaited with interest, although it is likely that the method will remain in the hands of a few workers.


During the last 20 years there have been occasional reports in the literature of single cases, or small groups of cases, in which diverse neurological disorders have been related to a curious bony abnormality at the junction of the cervical spine with the skull. This abnormality is variously spoken of as basilar impression, basilar invagination, and platybasia, and in brief it amounts to an upward protrusion of the vertebral column into the posterior cranial fossa. It can be demonstrated radiographically in a lateral projection in which the tip of the odontoid process is found to lie above "Chamberlain's line", a line drawn from the posterior edge of the hard palate to the posterior margin of the foramen magnum. In most cases this is a congenital abnormality, although it may be acquired in later life in some bony dystrophies such as Paget's disease in which the softened skull may be said to subside on the vertebral column like a leaking balloon fixed to the top of a pole.

In a scholarly monograph, Garcin and Oeconomos have collected a vast amount of data about this condition and the closely related one of atlanto-occipital fusion or occipitalization of the atlas. They describe the numerous associated abnormalities, such as the Klippel-Feil syndrome and the Arnold-Chiari malformation, syringomyelia, etc., and give a good account of the neurological pictures which may be encountered. In the majority, the lesion affects chiefly the spinal cord, but in some there may be increased intracranial pressure and the clinical picture is that of a brain tumour without much in the way of localizing signs. Knowledge of the presence of one of these cranio-vertebral abnormalities may simplify diagnosis and point the way to treatment, and obviously this is information which should be in the hands of every neurologist, neurological surgeon, orthopaedist, and radiologist.

The authors are to be congratulated on the clear
presentation of their survey of the literature, as well as of their own personal observations. There is a comprehensive bibliography and the radiographs and clinical photographs are excellent.


This small book is put forward as a postgraduate refresher course in neurological diagnosis, and the tests described are simple clinical tests. They are not new, but the author has selected those that he has found most useful, and he describes in detail how they should be performed, what is their physiological basis, and what conclusions can justifiably be drawn. The book is readable, almost conversational in style, and being based on the author's considerable experience as a teacher, it provides as good a substitute as possible for instruction in physical signs at the bedside. Although intended for general practitioners, it will be read with pleasure and profit by neurologists.


This work describes a careful study of 60 cases of disseminated sclerosis, and the clinical changes occurring in them during periods averaging 18 months. It includes a study of the effects of anticoagulant therapy with "synparin" (dicoumarol) on 35 patients. The dosage used was sufficient to cause bleeding in 24 of the patients, but in spite of this the author concludes that "anticoagulation therapy was unable to alter the course of the disease." The primary object of the publication is, however, to give a highly detailed account of the course of the disease over a period long enough to include a significant number of "attacks" or relapses, but not too long for continued accurate observations. Such a study is especially helpful in the very difficult problem of assessing the practical value of treatment. The author concludes that "observation of 50 patients or less, in the course of a maximum period of one year warrants an evaluation of the result of attempts at causal action on at least those factors which are at present considered pathogenic." He supports the conclusion of Schaltenbrand that any treatment which has "weniger Erfolge als 50%, Remissionen bei akuten Schuben", is probably harming the patient.

The first 170 pages of this book include a useful review of previous papers on the course of the disease, an account of the procedure used by the authors in their 1,545 examinations of the 60 patients, a definition of the word "attack", and general conclusions from the whole series. The following 80 pages give details of the case histories. A list of 157 references concludes this useful work. The book is well produced and printed but has a few misprints. While most of these are unimportant, the use of the word "impairment" in mistake for "improvement" in the quotation on p. 158, might cause some misunderstanding.


This monograph attempts somewhat laboriously to investigate the evidence concerning the effect of lesions of the brain-stem on the occurrence of various disorders such as peptic ulcer, hyperthyroidism, blood pressure disorder, and diabetes mellitus, for which brain-stem disorder has been suggested as a cause in recent medical writings.

The material used for this investigation is a series of 60 cases selected from over 2,000 cases of brain wound in which a missile (often a small metal fragment) had penetrated the region of the brain-stem. These 60 cases are each described in detail. Apart from the fully established pituitary and hypothalamic syndromes (such as diabetes insipidus, adiposity, and genital disorder) the findings of this study are largely negative as regards the effect of these lesions on conditions such as peptic ulcer, hyperthyroidism, etc. Neurologists who are interested in brain-stem lesions will find much worth studying in this work.


This work in two volumes and over 2,000 pages contains contributions from 42 authors. It attempts something more than a simple reformulation of the conventional principles and practice of medicine. In the first half of the first volume are considered two of the wider implications of medicine which have come to influence greatly the outlook of our day. The borderland—perhaps one should say rather the "heartland"—where psychological medicine in its widest aspects interacts with physical, is dealt with both in sections on psychosomatic medicine and more formal psychological medicine and in the general evaluation of symptoms and the taking of a medical history. The place of medicine in society—social medicine both in the sense of public health work and of the newer viewpoint which the late Professor John Ryle, himself a contributor here, outlined in his "Changing Disciplines"—is also considered. This part therefore forms to some extent a prolegomenon to a philosophy of medicine and provides a setting for subsequent sections and the second volume, in which systemic diseases are separately treated. Most doctors who think on their vocation will welcome this approach, even if they disagree with details.

In the second volume Dr. Garland writes the section of some 250 pages on the nervous system. The subject is dealt with from the viewpoint of daily neurological practice, and those diseases which are in fact commonly met with are allotted appropriate space, while rarities,
even though interesting, are more briefly mentioned. This should increase the reference value of the book to both students and practitioners. It is seen to special advantage in the sections on peripheral nerve syndromes in upper and lower limbs, where much deadwood of theoretical aetiology is abandoned in favour of clear descriptions of the clinical picture and setting of the lesion. Brevity must at times entail an apparent dogmatism, and there are some statements which are controversial. That "nasal sinus infection is never a cause of retrobulbar neuritis" seems contravened by recently published cases. Not all would agree that iodides, mercury and bismuth now have no place in the treatment of general paralysis of the insane, nor that the picture of juvenile general paralysis of the insane is like that in the adult. It is difficult to see why, in the treatment of narcolepsy, ephedrine, which is relatively ineffective, should be preferred to amphetamine, which often produces virtual control of symptoms. It is perhaps to be regretted, in a work that is otherwise so practical, that there is no attempt to deal with the general principles of palliative treatment which inevitably looms so large in chronic neurological disease. However, these are minor criticisms of an article which undoubtedly contributes an up-to-date picture of neurological practice.


This little book is recommended reading for psychoanalysts, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, and neurologists, even if only as a bed-side book. The author's style is vigorous and forthright to a fault, and there is not a dull passage in his sustained polemic. Although, from the point of view of those of moderate opinion, he greatly over-states the case, and is not prepared to give credit to Freud for the very real advances and discoveries he made, yet much that is said is pertinent and sensible and badly needs saying.

There are many basic tenets of psychoanalysis which are dogmatically asserted but still scientifically not yet established. Many of these contain an element of truth, but are probably not true without exception. Freud maintained, for instance, that the mistakes of everyday life were unconsciously motivated; this was a novel and revolutionary idea and is, no doubt, true in some cases. When, however, it asserts that every error, however trivial or accidental, is motivated, psychoanalytic theory steps beyond the bounds legitimately set by scientific caution. The Freudian generalizations which Salter attacks include the pan-sexual theory of motivation, "penis envy" as a universal factor in the psychology of women, the ethnic and cultural universality of the Oedipus complex, and the death instinct. Psychoanalytic technique, particularly that of dream interpretation, is critically analysed. The psychoanalytic claim that criticisms which do not stem from those who have been analysed need not be heeded, is rightly pilloried. And there is an interesting account of the statistical results of psychoanalytic treatment. The largest study of this kind was that of Knight, and included 952 cases from the psychoanalytic institutes of Berlin, London, Chicago, etc. Of these 736 were cases of psychoneurosis, sexual disorder, and conditions supposed to be especially of the kind to merit psychoanalysis. Of these 736 patients, 205 were regarded as failures through breaking off treatment in under six months, 212 made no or no significant improvement, 172 were much improved and 157 were "cured". These results, which are little better than those obtained in normal psychiatric out-patient clinics, would hardly seem to be a sufficient justification of the very expensive and time-consuming psychoanalytic technique.

Although the author has provided a work which is always readable, often stimulating and sometimes amusing, one may wonder whether the weight of the argument would not have been better served by a more dispassionate presentation.


In Switzerland the links between psychiatry and biology have always been strong. August Forel was an outstanding example of this. Professor Brun, as a pupil of Forel, concerned himself closely with the behaviour of ants and other insects before he became immersed in the problems of neurology and psychopathology. The current of adverse opinion which caused the term "instinct" to fall into ill repute among psychologists has rather passed him by, and the present volume is largely concerned with analogies between instinctual behaviour in ants and the drives in human beings postulated by psychoanalytic theory. It is composed of lectures delivered in the University of Zurich to a mixed medical and lay audience; the exposition is therefore fluent rather than precise, stimulating rather than critical. Professor Brun is aware of the recent European work on comparative psychology, such as that of Lorenz and Tinbergen, but he is unacquainted with the extensive American literature and falls into some well known pitfalls in equating human behaviour with that of other animals, especially insects and birds. His account of psychoanalysis is broadly correct, but superficial.


This book describes a research project which took five years and involved well over 50 people and, as far as can be seen, most of the United States of America. Its aim was the selection of clinical psychologists by objective methods. Students were tested at the beginning of their training, and the test scores compared with later performances.

Although the authors apparently realize, as stated on p. 114, that "the value of a research project is a function of its eventual impact on theory", this does not seem
to have deterred them from becoming involved in a scheme which, by its very nature, was incapable of theoretical implications, and in addition, seems to have had largely negative results.


The author is Professor of Psychology in the University of South Carolina, and his book is planned as a textbook for the use of university students who will take a degree in psychology. It is, therefore, based on a background which is unfamiliar to the British reader, as the subject matter in this country would be regarded as exclusively medical, but is here presented for the instruction of non-medical students. Like other products of the American psychological school, such as the "Abnormal Psychology" by James D. Page, it covers the subject matter of psychiatry with a degree of scholarship and objectivity which is of less frequent occurrence in American schools of psychiatry; nevertheless it cannot but suffer from its defect of being based on an other than clinical background. This weakness is particularly noticeable when methods of treatment, especially the physical methods such as insulin coma, are considered; but throughout the work the lack of bedside experience makes itself felt. However, the somewhat theoretical approach of the author has its advantages as well as its disadvantages, being seen in the adequate account which is given of historical development in the various branches of the subject, and in the unbiased though sometimes inconclusive weighing up of opposed hypothetical formulations.


As with Professor Klein's work, noticed above, the author of this work is a professor of psychology in the U.S.A. The field covered, however, is considerably narrower, and instead of embracing almost the whole of psychiatry, is restricted to a consideration of the theoretical nature of normality and abnormality, the causes of abnormality, and the diagnostic and therapeutic aspects of deviations of personality. The approach is neo-Freudian. His earlier career having been spent in Berlin, the author is familiar with the European as well as the American literature; and at the end of every chapter a very large list of references is provided. The work will be found useful by students of psychoanalysis.


The unquestioned preeminence of this book in the literature of mental deficiency has been maintained through the unrelenting labour of Dr. Tredgold, who did his utmost to keep it up to date. For the present edition the sections on aetiology, educational disabilities, and legal enactments have been partly rewritten. Though in the application of psychological tests and recent genetical knowledge the author was unable to keep pace with rapid technical and theoretical developments, his work remains the fullest general textbook on the whole subject. It is much to be hoped that it will receive in future editions as thorough revising attention as its distinguished author gave it, and will at the same time be pruned in some sections, chiefly of historical interest or reflecting Dr. Tredgold's personal view of biological and kindred matters on which opinion and evidence have turned in other directions than that which he preferred.

Notes on Mental Deficiency. By J. F. Lyons and W. A. Heaton-Ward. (Pp. 48; 15 figures. 3s. 6d.) Bristol : John Wright and Sons. 1953.

This little booklet provides in highly compressed form all the information about mental deficiency which most practitioners require. The legal aspects of deficiency are particularly well covered, and there are sections on the legal classification of defectives, ascertainment, reasons for action under the Acts, Orders under the Act, etc. Clinical description, aetiology, pathology, and the medical sides of deficiency are not so satisfactory, but at least enough of the right kind of information is provided to delight the candidate for a psychiatric diploma. One may expect that the booklet will find its way on to the shelves for ready reference in time of difficulty not only of general practitioners but also of neurological and psychiatric consultants. It is to be hoped that, if so, in later editions, somewhat fuller information is included about the frequency of different forms of mental deficiency, demographic aspects, and genetics.


In the compass of a short and easily read book, the author provides an account of the history of hypnotism, its theoretical aspects, mechanisms, physiology and psychology, and then turns to its practical applications. The new concepts, referred to in the title, are, essentially, that the psychotherapist should make use of the hypnotic state, as one in which the patient is more than normally accessible, for the application of standard psychotherapeutic techniques, especially those depending on psychoanalysis. As generally applied, hypnotism is used solely for suggestive therapy, and though the author points out various problems with which the suggestive application of hypnosis can be useful, he believes this constitutes only a small part of its range.

The book is written informatively and in a reasonably critical and objective way; if it has the effect of turning the attention of responsible medical men to this interesting but often misused weapon, it will prove beneficial. It is much to be regretted that some of the surprising results which are claimed, e.g., in producing hypermesia, are still insufficiently established and investigated, though these claims have certainly not been refuted.

This new edition appears in a revised form under the editorship of A. I. Lansing. The biological, clinical, and social aspects of ageing are discussed by 48 contributors. The various essays are, on the whole, short and well balanced reviews, and most of the contributors helpfully point out the many problems still awaiting investigation. The chapter on the nervous system provides much information of the advances made in the last decade in the histological, neurological, and psychiatric aspects of ageing. Other chapters deal with the eye, the ear, the endocrine glands, and with functional and structural alterations in the kidney in the aged. The chapter on experimental hypertension is well annotated but one wonders how necessary this topic is in a symposium of this nature. The chapter on rehabilitation and the other social problems of ageing will be of interest to workers in this country at a time when energetic measures are being taken to counteract the consequences of a progressive increase in ageing in our population.

BOOKS RECEIVED

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

The Founders of Neurology. (133 biographic sketches by 84 authors.) Edited by Webb Haymaker. (Pp. 479; 133 portraits. 75s. 6d.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1953.


Galvani: Commentary on Electricity. Translated by Robert Montraville Green. (Pp. 97; illustrated. $4.00.) Cambridge, Mass.: Elizabeth Licht. 1953.


