BOOK REVIEWS


This is a survey of the legislation regarding the admission of mental patients to hospital in more than 30 countries. The various methods of admission in different countries are surveyed under a number of heads: voluntary admission, involuntary admission, emergency admission, and admission for observation. Special categories of patients are then discussed: alcoholics and addicts, offenders and prisoners, and sexual offenders. This section of the book is perhaps the most interesting and illustrates how in many ways this country lags behind in much-needed reforms.


This survey is an analysis of the work of nursing staff in a mental hospital and two mental deficiency hospitals. It was directed by Mr. H. A. Goddard who analysed the work of nurses in general hospitals (published as The Work of Nurses in Hospital Wards, in 1955) and organized along the same lines. The purpose of the study was to determine how to make the best use of available resources. The present grave shortage of mental nursing staff makes this imperative and Mr. Goddard makes some valuable recommendations.


This book approaches the treatment of schizophrenia from the psychoanalytical viewpoint and claims to be a "comprehensive, lucid discussion of the whole subject of treatable schizophrenia". However, only scant mention is made of physical methods of treatment.

The author's opinion is that deep psychotherapy is the treatment of choice. He does not attempt to give any evidence to support this opinion, nor is there evidence for his many other views, for example, that the patient's "schizophrenic problems and preoccupations, interests and attitudes, derive their peculiarity primarily from his attitudes towards his mother", a mother who is described as "immature and obsessive and hysterical" and "anxious, guilt-ridden, ashamed".

If the author had given facts to support his views, this book might have had considerable value.


In this book, the author's aim has been to provide "a fairly concise background of factual information" regarding psychiatry. So far as the clinical aspects are concerned, he has succeeded: psychiatric syndromes are clearly described and there is an appendix of case histories. These include verbatim interviews which give the histories a liveliness usually absent in such books.

BOOSES RECEIVED

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


Contributi del Laboratorio di Psicologia, Vols. xlviii and xlix. (Pp. 426 and 540 respectively; illustrated. No price given.) Published by Vita E Pensiero, Milan. 1955.