electroencephalography of focal lesions. The language difficulty need not deter the English reader of reasonable intelligence and with a knowledge of E.E.G. terminology, as most of the technical words are but thinly veiled in their Italian transliteration.


This monograph records the effects of the injection of metrazol in epileptic subjects. The changes seen in the patient and his electro-encephalogram are used to localize the site of the discharging lesion and to study the behavioural accompaniments. The work is by a team in a research institute where patients are subjected to special and highly specific study, and the data have not necessarily direct application to the care of the epileptic patient at large. The method of "activation" the authors use is effective and safe, but the phenomena produced are exceedingly complex and their description and analysis seems to be somewhat tortuous.

DENIS WILLIAMS


This book is the result of a joint meeting of the Western Institute of Neurology, the Western Society of Electroencephalography, and the American Academy of General Practice. It is divided into three parts. The first is concerned with diagnosis, the second with treatment, and the third with educational and social problems. This last section reflects the general social environment of the United States and is only applicable in very general terms to this country. It is evident that the major problem there, as here, is to get the community in general to accept and allow for the epileptic. Some useful information is given about disposal problems and the way they are overcome both for special cases such as cerebral palsies with epilepsy and for the "normal" epileptic of average education.

Diagnosis is considered both clinically and electrically. A useful brief analysis of clinical fits and their site of origin is given by Wilder Penfield. Electroencephalographic localization is also reviewed. Medical and surgical treatment is discussed. Anticonvulsant drugs are being developed rapidly, and several that are now proving useful in 1957 are not mentioned in this book published in 1956. The late results of surgical treatment—cortical excision of epileptic foci—are reviewed by Penfield and suggest that 40-45% are free from attacks for a seven-year follow-up period. In general the book reflects the modern approach to epilepsy in which the "causes" of the condition are put on one side and the practical problem is regarded as one of finding where the epileptic discharge originates and then of stopping it by medical or surgical means. It is a useful short summary of this attitude and can be recommended to students and practitioners.


This book approaches epilepsy mainly from the clinical standpoint. In the first part the epilepsies are classified clinically and the symptoms and signs analysed; an anatomical classification is, however, also introduced, as some attempt is made to indicate the likely site of the origin of the particular form of seizure being discussed. Part two considers special aspects of epilepsy, such as status, mental changes in epilepsy, suicide, and a variety of clinical subgroups—sleep epilepsy, myoclonic epilepsy, infantile epilepsy, and reflex epilepsy. A third part considers diagnosis with special emphasis on the E.E.G., and finally, a fourth, anatomy and physiology, together with treatment.

In general, most of the facts are there, but the book is badly arranged, so that information is repeated and there is no method of distinguishing what is important from what is trivial. Certain authors are mentioned by name in the text, but no attempt is made to provide proper references.


The concept of mental deficiency has been gradually changing in the past few decades from an assessment based mainly on "intellectual" tests to one based more on "social efficiency". This has been a most valuable and productive change of attitude, and it is reflected in this book. The idea that mental deficiency has as its aetiological background functional abnormalities in the biochemical and physiological spheres has also gained ground, though it was always recognized implicitly by workers in this field. Here, too, this new book reflects the new emphasis. It is, moreover, an essentially practical book, and deals adequately not only with the management of defectives in health and disease but with the legal and social aspects of the problem also. A useful chapter on advice to parents is included. The book can be thoroughly recommended to students and practitioners who want an up-to-date, practical and humane introduction to the subject. The British literature in this important field is small, and this is a most worth-while addition.


This is a study of 178 chronic alcoholics, treated as in-patients in one of four different ways—by "antabuse" therapy, conditioned reflex therapy, hypnotherapy, and "milieu therapy". The latter was intended as a control group having the same hospital facilities as the other groups (activity programme, group and individual psychotherapy, etc.) without any of the "specific" therapies. It became clear, however, that this group evolved as a distinct treatment group. The authors studied not only the overall results of the different
therapies, but also endeavoured to ascertain which types of patient did best with the different methods of treatment.

The results bore out the opinions of most clinicians, namely, that the treatment of the chronic alcoholic is not very satisfactory. Only "antabuse" gave better results than the "milieu therapy" group. The results with conditioned reflex therapy (emetine) were no better than in the "milieu therapy" group. One wonders, however, whether the conditioned reflex therapy was given in its most effective form. The treatment was given once daily for five days; perhaps a more concentrated form of induced emesis, reducing the patient to the state of physical and mental exhaustion which Sargent has described, when the patient is more receptive to ideas of "conversion", would have given better results.

This is a careful, if pessimistic, study which should be read by anyone interested in the treatment of the chronic alcoholic.

BOOKS RECEIVED

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


Scandinavian Neurosurgical Society

The annual meeting of the Scandinavian Neurosurgical Society will take place in Copenhagen on Friday, August 29, and Saturday, August 30, 1958. Secretary: Bendt Broager, M.D., Bispebjerg Hospital, Copenhagen NV, Denmark.

International Congress of Psychotherapy

The fourth international congress of psychotherapy will be held from Monday, September 1, till Sunday, September 7, 1958, in Barcelona and is organized by the Sociedad Espanola de Medicina Psicosomatica y Psicoterapia. Secretary: Catedra de Psiquiatria de la Facultad de Medicina Casanova, 143, Barcelona.