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Taraxin, isolated in 1955 by Heath and his colleagues at Tulane University, New Orleans, from the serum of schizophrenic patients, has led a precarious life since then. Its existence has been questioned, and its effects denied. Heath injected it intravenously into monkeys and observed profound changes in behaviour as well as electrical changes in the brain similar to those observed in schizophrenic patients; he then administered it to prisoners in the local gaol who volunteered to submit to the experiment, and reported that they developed characteristic symptoms of schizophrenia. Other psychiatrists repeated these investigations and obtained negative results. Heath attributed this to the instability of taraxin. In 1959 Kety wrote a survey of biochemical theories of schizophrenia which included a balanced but damaging statement on the weakness of Heath’s claims. Others, however, in Detroit, Stockholm, and elsewhere produced more favourable findings. A symposium was held at New Orleans in 1961 at which the current status of the problem was reviewed, almost entirely from a favourable standpoint. In this book reporting the symposium there are four sections, dealing respectively with fractionation procedures, animal assays, mode of action, and clinical studies. The first of these sections is at this stage the crucial one. It seems clear that a variety of fractionation methods is in use for the separation of a protein which when injected can disturb the behaviour of experimental animals. The chemical nature of the substances thus separated is uncertain. Hoagland and his associates at Worcester put the matter cautiously in one of the contributions to the symposium: ‘an abnormality exists in the globulin portion of the plasma proteins of schizophrenics, but it has not been determined whether this is due to the presence of a new protein or to the increased amount of a naturally occurring plasma protein. Nor has it been proved whether the abnormality is causally related to the disease or an incidental by-product of it.’ To the subject, thus properly left sub judice, the papers in the symposium are a useful background.


It is widely (and correctly) believed that psychiatry in the United States is dominated by psychoanalytical doctrine, somewhat modified by American pragmatism and the current emphasis on the use of drugs. Nevertheless, there is now much research activity which is concerned with the biological characteristic of mental abnormality, just as there is now much investigation of epidemiological and social aspects. There are two societies explicitly devoted to such studies: the Society of Biological Psychiatry and the American Society of Medical Psychiatry. At the seventeenth annual meeting of the former of these societies a number of papers, many of them embodying previously unpublished work, were read and are reproduced here. They indicate a vigorous effort at biochemical and clinical study of mental disorder and the mode of action of reserpine, mono-amine oxidase inhibitors, and psychotomimetic drugs. The majority of these studies are sober and restrained; the Academic Lecture, however, which was delivered by Professor Cazzullo of Milan, was rather sweeping in its claims.

The special subject dealt with at the meeting was anomalies of development. Here, as in the metabolic studies, animal experiments were reported, as well as laboratory and clinical observations on human beings. Many of the papers dealt with the interplay between the foetus or the neonate and its mother: there was a refreshing absence of speculation about the psychological happenings in the baby’s mind. Although the findings in a

J. M. K. SPALDING


The literature on substances producing pain is now very large. Dr. Keele and his colleagues have contributed much to the subject. It is therefore appropriate that he should produce this monograph. It is a comprehensive review of the peripheral chemical mechanisms in pain production, with a full and particularly useful bibliography. Some consideration is also given to the part played by peripheral nerves and their endings and the interrelations of these with chemical pain producers. Central pain and its mechanisms is not considered.

Having reviewed the experimental and pharmacological evidence in detail and with thorough critical discussion, the authors mention briefly some clinical conditions associated with pain and discuss the possible role of the factors elucidated by laboratory work. Here the authors are perhaps less critical than they might be of clinical ‘facts’. Nevertheless clinicians will find these chapters of special interest. Indeed the whole volume cannot fail to be interesting and important for all those who have to deal with pain and particularly for those who try to investigate it in the clinical setting.

C. W. M. WHITTY


Recent advances in the study of the chemical changes that occur in the brain of acute patients with psychosis, has been made by Lister and his colleagues at the Maudsley Hospital. The present book is a comprehensive account of the present knowledge of the subject.

L. F. GOGGINS


The University of Tulane has grown in the last one hundred years from a tiny beginning to the outstanding status it holds today. This book is a fascinating account of the university’s history, covering the period from its establishment in 1834 to 1963.

H. C. PARSONS


The book is a comprehensive account of the mental disorder of mental health, covering both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. The author has produced a well-organized and coherent text, which is a valuable contribution to the field.

R. H. LISK


The book is a comprehensive account of the mechanical effects of electrical stimulation, covering both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. The author has produced a well-organized and coherent text, which is a valuable contribution to the field.
few of the papers arouse mild scepticism, for example, the
favourable effects of ribonucleic acid upon the impaired
memory of old people, they are all stimulating and
suggestive.

DIE SCHIZOPHRENIEÄHNLICHEN EMOTIONSPSYCHOSEN By F.
Labhardt. (Pp. vi + 103; 21 tables. DM. 28.-) Berlin:

In the enormous literature on schizophrenia much attention
has been given to those states which in clinical
structure are practically indistinguishable from schizo-
phrenia, but which rarely occur in families with schizo-
phrenic members, are relatively seldom associated with a
recognizably schizoid premorbid personality, and follow a
more favourable course than the "general run of schizo-
phrenics. Dr. Labhardt has singled out from these schizo-
phreniform illnesses a subgroup precipitated by severe
emotional stress, as delineated by his teacher, Professor
Staehelein. He has collected 61 such patients, seen in the
Basle University Clinic between 1938 and 1958. Dr. Labhardt
has examined these patients systematically. Eight of them
were at a later stage diagnosed as showing unequivocal schizophre-
nia; the remaining 53 were studied separately. The main conclusion was that this is a recog-
nizable group, in whom the clinical features, though
resembling schizophrenia, differ in the understandable
content of the psychotic symptoms, the patients' good
rapport and empathic accessibility, and their rapid
recovery. The condition would be regarded in English
psychiatric terminology as a schizo-affective reaction.

PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE, 5th ed. By Desmond Curran.
(Pp. viii + 427; 20 figures. 30s.) Edinburgh: E. & S.
Livingstone Ltd. 1963.

In the 20 years of its existence this textbook of psychiatry
has commended itself to medical students and to those
doctors who wanted a straightforward, fairly dogmatic
presentation of the subject 'without frills'. The present
edition resembles the last closely, except in its detailed
account of the Mental Health Act, the section on the use
of drugs, and the classification of neurotic disorders. In
regard to the last of these innovations, the authors
believe that by considering them under the general head-
ing 'personality problems' they are breaking away from
traditional views; but they are, in fact, reverting to the
standard German approach, well set out in Kraepelin's
great textbook and embodied in Eugen Kahn's work on
'psychopathic personalities', which was translated by
Flanders Dunbar. It has many advantages but is not easily
reconciled with the authors' Meyerian conception of the
psychoses.

The book is easy to read, unpretentious, as factual as
the subject permits, and reasonably free from technical
language and concepts. It deserves to maintain its wide
popularity.

GESTALTEN UND GEĐANKEN By Ernst Kretschmer. (Pp. viii
+ 223. DM.28.-) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag.
1963.

The late Professor Kretschmer was the last of those able
men who gave German psychiatry before the advent of the
National Socialists a pre-eminent international

position. His books on 'Physique and character', on
'Sensitiver Beziehungswahn', and on 'Genius', had far-
reaching influence, and his more expansive expositions
of medical psychology and psychotherapy were widely
read. The man himself was not so well known outside
Germany. In this attractively written autobiography
Kretschmer shows his feelings and his devotion to his
Swabian origins. He delineates his parents affectionately,
and traces his ancestry back to some men of note, the
theologians Brenz and Johann Bengel and the scientists
Kepler and Gmelin. His pride in them is frankly avowed.
An account of his student days in Tübingen just before the
first world war, his subsequent appointment as
Dozent, and his struggles in defence of his point of view
lead up to the clinical activities and research of his later
years. He devotes a chapter to recounting evidence of his
antagonism to the National Socialist authorities during
his tenure of the Chair in Marburg. There is an ingenious
strain of self-satisfaction running through the memoirs
which is not without its charm.

BOOKS RECEIVED

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

MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN AND THEIR EDUCATION
By Elmer W. Weber. (Pp. xiii + 338. $10.75.) Spring-

ACTUALITES DE THERAPEUTIQUE PSYCHIATRIQUE By A.
Achaintre and others. (Pp. 368; illustrated. 40 F.)

THE NURSE IN MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE By Audrey L.
John, Maria O. Leite-Ribeiro, and Donald Buckle.
(Pp. 212; 34 tables. 12s.) Geneva: World Health
Organization. 1963.

DESAGREGATION, REGRESSION ET RECONSTRUCTION DANS
LA SCHIZOPHRENIE By J. Burstin. (Pp. 181.) Toulouse:
Edouard Privat. 1963.

MULTIFAKTORIELLE KLINISCHE FORSCHUNG Statistische
Methoden mit einer Faktorenanalyse bei progressiver
Paralyse By H. J. Bochnik and H. Legewie. (Pp. 66;
9 figures; 2 tables. DM. 14.50.) Stuttgart: Ferdinand
Enke Verlag. 1964.

DER TUBERKULOSE IM STRAFVOLLZUG By Th. Johannes.

THE SCIENCE OF SMELL By R. H. Wright. (Pp. xii + 164;
illustrated. 30s.) London: George Allen & Unwin
Ltd. 1964.

HUMANENETIK Ein kurzes handbuch in fünf Bänden.
Band II. Edited by P. E. Becker. (Pp. xvi + 663; 802
figures. DM. 198.-) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag.
1964.

THE RETINAL GANGLION CELL LAYER By J. M. Van Buren.
(Pp. x + 143; 79 figures. $10.75.) Springfield, Illinois:

MEETING THE INCREASING STRESSES OF LIFE By Earl A.
Taylor. (Pp. xii + 193. $6.50.) Springfield, Illinois:

HYPNOSIS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD Edited by F. L.
Marcuse. (Pp. ix + 312. $11.00.) Springfield, Illinois: