few of the papers arouse mild scepticism, for example, the favourite effects of ribonucleic acid upon the impaired memory of old people, they are all stimulating and suggestive.


In the enormous literature on schizophrenia much attention has been given to those states which in clinical structure are practically indistinguishable from schizophrenia, but which rarely occur in families with schizophrenic members, are relatively seldom associated with a recognizably schizoid premorbid personality, and follow a more favourable course than the general run of schizophrenics. Dr. Labhardt has singled out from these schizophreniform illnesses a subgroup precipitated by severe emotional stress, as delineated by his teacher, Professor Staehelin. 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 schizophrenia; the remaining 53 were studied separately. The main conclusion was that this is a recognizable 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.


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 heading '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.


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 ingenuous 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.)


