material for the neurologist than for the linguist, and provides a useful framework of reference for discussion and clinical study.


The neurologist needs no convincing of the potential importance of a clear understanding of the anatomy of the afferent parts of the nervous system, but, with a scepticism born of the disappointments of recording the evanescent and unconfirmable reports of patients in the clinic, he has allowed the arguments of the cognoscenti to flutter to and fro and made do with the elementary concept of his medical student days. It is valuable, therefore, to be reminded of the shaky foundations of our knowledge and to have the state of the play reviewed at a convenient point in time.

The factual findings are clearly separated from the theoretical interpretations. Three main theories are discussed (1) specificity, (2) duality in Head’s sense, (3) spatio-temporal patterns. While Professor Sinclair, who has contributed so much to the development of knowledge in this field, favours the pattern theory, with particular reference to the recent formulation of Melzack and Wall, it is interesting to note the resurgence of interest in the duality theory, which only a few years ago would have been dismissed as of only historical interest.

The book is well documented, methodically laid out, and beautifully produced. It will amply repay careful study and will be a frequent companion of all who have to lecture on the foundations of neurology.

J. A. SIMPSON


This volume is a collection of 15 papers from those actively engaged in Great Britain in the application of computers to medical problems. Their subjects range from the research laboratory through the diagnostic clinic to the bedside, and a helpful glossary is included so that no one need feel deterred by the jargon. The usual high standard of production is maintained and seven reviews of recent books on the subject of computers in medicine are included, so that, in all, this volume provides a complete introduction to a rapidly expanding field.

**SCIENCE AND PSYCHIATRY** By Brian H. Kirman. (Pp. 82. 7s. 6d.) Lawrence and Wishart: London. 1968.


The general public need have no difficulty in finding out what psychiatrists believe and do. Excellent paperbacks are available which are simply and clearly written. Dr. Kirman’s is a good example, which has the merit of taking adequate account of mental retardation, instead of the perfunctory mention usually made of this important branch of psychiatry. He also puts much weight on the social causes and effects of mental disorder. An intentional, if tacit, bias is revealed in the cursory references to psychopathology and psychotherapy, and perhaps in the choice of title.

Dr. Willis’s little book is directed at medical students. It is dry and factual, so far as the exposition of this subject can be kept free from unconfirmed opinions. The necessity of compression is no doubt responsible for some questionable statements—for example, that Bleuler in his monograph represented thought disorder as a central feature of schizophrenia, or that chronic mania ‘does not exist’. On the whole it is remarkable how much essential information Dr. Willis has been able to squeeze into 99 crown octavo pages.


Dr. Walker believes that psychiatrists who need to be reminded to watch for physical disease in their patients will be helped in detecting and diagnosing tell-tale signs if they have at their elbow a schematic catalogue of the characteristics, treatment, and laboratory findings in each somatic disorder. The psychiatrist’s ignorance is assumed to be great; he is told what a lumbar puncture is, how to examine the mental state, and given other elementary guidance. The compressed details are reliably set out, in cram-book style, and with an occasionally odd choice of words—for example, ‘Menopause is infamous for the psychological maladjustments with which it is associated’.


Dr. Vail, who published a report on the British hospital system three years ago, next turned his experienced eye on the mental health arrangements in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. He spent 18 days in the three countries. This might be thought insufficient, but Dr. Vail is a practised assessor of public health services, he made business-like preparations for his visits, and he collected much statistical and official information which he incorporated in his book. His special interest in Scandinavian facilities and administration arises not only because of the known excellence of the psychiatric developments in these countries, but also because of the close ties between Norway and Minnesota, the state in which Dr. Vail is Director of the Department of Public Welfare. The result of his inquiries is set out in an orderly way, and provides, as he intended, a guide book, admittedly incomplete, but reliable and informative.


This book is subtitled ‘A study of the interaction between psychopathology, literature and reality in the modern world’, chapters deal with motives for space travel, the
longing for the alien, aliens in space, humanoids in space (aliens envisaged by fantasy), belief in flying saucers and yearning for guardians. Hamlet and Prospero. The approach is wide-ranging, even discursive, and the psychological insights tentative; it has not the overwhelming plausibility that Freud's excursions offered, and its lack of balance and of a continuous theme renders it scrappy—more suited to be offered in chunks in the columns of a 'quality weekly' than as a serious publication. There is an ingenious suggestion about the real-life model for Prospero.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ANXIETY By E. E. Levitt. (Pp. 259; illustrated. 36s.) Staples Press: London. 1968. This book is easy to read and provides a pleasant account of the subject of anxiety, suitable for those in whom some psychological trappings are considered appropriate. It would be a pity, however, if it were to fall into the hands of a potential serious student of the subject; it devalues the attempts made to provide a physiological measure of anxiety, it is insufficiently critical of the questionnaire method on which it relies heavily, and ignores a whole range of recent important work—for instance, that by Lader and Wing in this journal 27, 210; 28, 78; 28, 414—that is proving of value in extending our knowledge of anxiety.

BASIC PSYCHIATRY By M. Sim and E. B. Gordon. (Pp. viii + 262. 25s.) Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1968. A book which compresses much of the material of psychological medicine in the form of short, ready-made answers to a series of questions will probably be welcomed by many of the increasing number of examination candidates in psychiatry. At the same time students will appreciate that a summary presentation of this type cannot be achieved without omissions and distortions. Indeed, the authors not only acknowledge the need for a larger textbook in their preface, but go so far as to conclude their compendium with a pointed suggestion: 'Those who desire a more comprehensive text with adequate reference should consult Guide to Psychiatry by Myre Sim, also published by E. & S. Livingstone Limited.'

BOOKS RECEIVED

Books noticed here may also be reviewed later


DAS NEUROLOGIE UND PSYCHISCHE DEFETS YNDROMBEI FRUHKINDLICHEN HIRNSCHADEN By G. Huffmann. (Pp. viii + 118; 24 figures; 17 tables. DM 38.00.) Thieme: Stuttgart. 1968.


NOTICE

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CLINICAL APPLICATIONS OF ISOTOPE CLEARANCE MEASUREMENT OF CEREBRAL BLOOD FLOW

An International Symposium on the Clinical Applications of Isotope Clearance Measurement of Cerebral Blood Flow will be held from 1 to 12 April 1969. Details may be obtained from Dr. med. M. Brock, 65-Mainz, Neurochirurgische Univ.-Klinik, Lanenbeckstrasse 1, Western Germany.

SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH INTO HYDROCEPHALUS AND SPINA BIFIDA

The thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Society will take place under the Presidency of Dr. J. L. Emery at the Institute of Psychiatry, DeCrespigny Park, Denmark Hill, London S.E.5, on 19, 20, and 21 June 1969. Further information from Dr. A. L. Woolf, Midland Centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology, Holly Lane, Smethwick, Warley, Worcestershire.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON CYBERNETICS

An International Congress on Cybernetics will be held in London from 1 to 5 September 1969. Further information may be obtained from Dr. J. Rose, College of Technology and Design, Blackburn, BB2 1 LH, Lancashire, UK.

CORRECTION

We regret that, because of an error that occurred during the final printing of the paper by Dr. G. Donald W. McKendrick "The Treatment of Pyogenic Meningitis" (October 1968, p. 528), the paper was incorrectly attributed to G. Donald and W. McKendrick, and that the error was perpetuated in the 1968 index.
Book reviews

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