BOOK REVIEWS


To the general physician neurology may seem a narrow speciality: to the neurologist it appears as a broad discipline whose boundaries intermingle with many other aspects of medicine, and within which there are smaller fields of special interest to him or her. This book will serve to correct the former and to enrich the latter view—no mean achievement in a single volume which remains of manageable size and yet gives adequate reference both to classical literature and to recent work. This is the fourth edition and almost the twentieth year of publication.

The last few years have seen great activity in neurophysiology and anatomy—the scientific institutes of clinical neurology—and it is tempting to apply their findings rapidly to the interpretation of disease. Preliminary critical assessment is the more tedious but wiser course which the author has followed. The work therefore still fulfils the expressed intention of the first edition to apply anatomy and physiology to clinical problems. More use will doubtless be made in future editions of recent but now established work on both the cortex and such interesting coordinating mechanisms as the reticular formation. Photographic illustrations are good, but line diagrams are few, and there is a complete absence of illustrations of the relations of spinal cord plexuses and peripheral nerves. This is quite general to English neurological texts, but is a surprising lacuna when one considers how essential such anatomical knowledge is for appreciating the endless vagaries of traumatic and occupational neuritis, and how misleading some anatomical texts can be. However, these are minor points. And the combination of clinical experience and reference to the wider implications of pathological disease will ensure for the book a continued and deserved popularity amongst students, general physicians, and neurologists.


Dr. Russell Brain has assembled here the various talks he has given over the past few years on the relation of mind and brain. The book is a collection of disparate essays linked by a unitary theme, the philosophically relevant aspects of the neurological background of perception and thought. The argument, illustrated rather than developed in the book, may be exemplified by a quotation from the second essay:

"... are there events in the brain which we can understand as being at the same time both physiological and mental? I believe that there are, and it is in the realm of speech and thought that we shall find them, even though they are little more than dim outlines seen through the mist of our ignorance."

Dr. Brain thus appears to incline to the "double-aspect theory" of mind-brain relationship, as Professor Boring terms it in his "Physical Dimensions of Consciousness". His contribution has the merit of bringing to the discussion some of the recent findings of neurology and neurophysiology of which many professional philosophers seem unaware.

The final chapter, written specially for the book, sums up the author's general position in a "conversation" between him and the reader. This is entertainingly done, and so crystallizes the arguments in earlier essays, that it might well be read first as an introduction by the non-philosophical reader.

The book does not solve any major problems of philosophy and does not claim to. It does show that the thoughtful neurologist has a contribution to make in this field.


This book sets out to describe the technique of encephalography, its complications, and the interpretation of normal and pathological encephalograms. There is a chapter on the pathology of the "encephalic" cerebrospinal fluid obtained from the lumbar sac after withdrawal of fluid and air replacement. Finally there are chapters on the medicolegal and therapeutic value of encephalography.

In a work of this nature the illustrations are of paramount importance. To be easily understood, diagrams should be reduced to a minimum of lines, and those which remain must be accurate outlines of essential structures. The diagrams in this book do not fulfil these criteria; the essentials are obscured by unnecessary features, and they are not entirely accurate. Some of the photographic reproductions are poor in detail, only four "normal" films are included, and some of the common projections are omitted. The latter would be excusable if the third and fourth ventricles could be clearly seen in the normal lateral view illustrated, but this is not the case.

In the discussion of pathological conditions almost all reference to space-occupying lesions is omitted, and none are illustrated. There is no mention of the important use of encephalography in the discernment of pituitary tumours and others in that neighbourhood. There is no mention of its use in the demonstration of subdural
haematomata in sections devoted to the sequelae of trauma.

The author considers that a significant increase in the number of cells found in a specimen of cerebrospinal fluid (cephalic) obtained after the injection of air into the lumbar sac, beyond the number found in a specimen of cerebrospinal fluid taken at the beginning of the procedure, is an indication of intracranial pathology and may be a useful guide in cases of post-traumatic epilepsy, in the treatment of general paralysis, and in other conditions. No useful information was obtained from a comparison of the chemical constituents of these samples.

As a source of information this monograph is incomplete and not well balanced; it has little value as a work of reference. The bibliography contains only works by French authors, 29 out of the 76 references being to papers by one author either alone or in collaboration with others. Although mention is made in the text of papers by other workers, the references are not given. There is no adequate index.


This book provides an interesting account of Dr. Lhermitte's thoughts on hallucinations, a subject on which he has long been an authority. Although the book is chiefly concerned with visual hallucinations, there are chapters on other aspects which include phantom limbs, hallucinations of hearing, taste, and smell, and of movement. The various types of hallucination which may occur in organic disease of the visual pathway are well described. It is perhaps disappointing to find no serious attempt to identify those parts of the brain which must be intact for hallucinations or phantom sensations to occur, and the relationship of these areas to those essential for visual imagery and the appreciation of body image respectively. There is no index and the bibliography is incomplete and inaccurate, but in spite of these disadvantages neurologists and psychiatrists will welcome the opportunity to read this book.


This monograph brings to bear on recent methods of treatment the rich clinical tradition of French psychiatry, too little known in this country. Seglas, de Cérambault, Janet, and Ey are the outstanding contributors to the line of thought applied here to elucidate the psychopathology of schizophrenia and delusional states associated with ideas of influence. The authors have treated a number of patients, combining hypno-analysis with convulsant and other therapeutic procedures, and have attained unexpected success in many cases. Their chief interest, however, has been focused on the psychological structure revealed when their patients were under the influence of an intravenous injection of pentothal. Less persistent and less dependent on psychoanalytical interpretations than Wolberg, who carried out a similar study in the United States, they find in their patients morbid processes essentially of the same kind as those that beset normal people during adolescence, in the form of an emotional and intellectual crisis, on which Dr. Bessière has already written. The theories of psychoanalysis and of Bleuler, Minkowski, and other authorities on schizophrenia are related to these findings. It is, however, difficult to endorse the writers' opinion that hypno-analysis, which is a technique not a theory, "opens infinitely wider horizons than the Freudian doctrine": this would surely be a very difficult achievement, out-Heroding Herod.


Dr. Lorand has much experience in guiding doctors who are being trained as psychoanalysts past the rocks and quicksands which make the last stages of "supervised analysis" hard to navigate. He gives advice on such matters as how to deal with the countertransference (the feelings that the psychoanalyst develops toward his patient), what variations upon standard procedure are permissible (e.g. allowing the patient to sit in a chair during the session instead of lying on a couch), and when to terminate treatment. Although of non-analysts the book will perhaps seem in part trivial and in part fantastic, it takes account of practical difficulties that arise frequently in this method of treatment and shows how ubiquitous sexual problems are and how determined the psychoanalyst must be to bring them into the open.


It is valuable to have a comprehensive account of the practice and theory of child psychiatry in France. In a country in which psychoanalysis is less entrenched than in England or the United States and the clinical tradition is strongly in favour of exact description and classification, it might be anticipated that the psychiatry of childhood would be more definite and tidy than it appears in English textbooks. This is to some extent the case: the divisions are sharper, theorizing is kept to a minimum, and the reader is spared the case histories which so often swell, without amplifying, psychiatric treatises. But neglect or ignorance of what has been going on elsewhere gives the book a parochial flavour, enhanced by the slapdash therapeutics: thus the author declares that "antispasmodics, calcium, trans-cerebral ionisation, arsenobenzols, alkaline glycerophosphates, cerebral lipoids and Vitamin B1 have an undeniable action on the neurological substrate for speech disorders". There are, however, many illuminating chapters, which reflect peculiarly French contributions (such as those of Dupré and Wallon to anomalies of psychomotor development), and it is to be hoped that in future editions the bibliographic references will be...
more carefully presented, so that original work hitherto little known outside France can be traced more readily than the book at present permits.


The study of expressive movements as a guide to personality has been advanced in Latin America by the researches of Professor Mira and his pupils. Dr. Coronel here describes fully how to administer and interpret the myokinetic test which Professor Mira first elaborated and reported during his stay in England 12 years ago. Since then it has been applied and investigated on a large scale, and its diagnostic uses explored. Apart from three introductory chapters, the author eschews theoretical questions, and his book is a manual rather than a monograph. It fulfills its purpose admirably, but there is room for a separate work collating and validating the findings of the test, at present mostly scattered through various Argentine and Brazilian journals: the literature, as the bibliography shows, is now considerable and rather inaccessible.


The author of this philosophical work is a retired professor of gynaecology in Frankfurt, who had been led to concern himself with the problems of growth and reproduction, and so, by way of endocrinology and the nervous system, to consider fundamental issues in biology. The secondary title of the book indicates that it is a study of vital processes in health and disease, surveyed from the unitary (i.e. the cellular), the special, and finally the holistic standpoints. It is a bold undertaking, perhaps to be judged by its aim more than its achievement. Clogged and at the same time biased by his learning, which centres on the reproductive process, the author fails to attain a clear synthesis: he is also handicapped, as he realizes, by lack of contact with much recent work in the physiology and psychology of integrative processes.


Since the first edition of this book in 1946 new material has been accumulated which made it necessary to rearrange and rewrite several sections. Its great merit lies in the avoidance of much tedious lore that appears in every psychiatric textbook, and its preference for objective studies and experiments. Although there are mistakes and peculiarities of emphasis due to the authors’ lack of medical training and experience, these are compensated for by their fresh outlook and stimulating account of recent work, much of it in psychological journals that psychiatrists seldom see.


All those who enjoy reading medical biographies will be pleased to have the one of Wagner-Jauregg (1857–1940). We associate his name with the discovery of malaria treatment for general paralysis of the insane, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1927. Apart from the account of personal experiences which this biography contains, it is an essential contribution to the history of the Viennese Medical School. The book describes the outstanding success of this continental teaching school, and also gives some of the reasons for its later decline. The reader especially concerned with the development of research and with the advances made in this field, will be interested to learn that Starlinger’s dogs, deprived of their pyramidal system, were operated on by Wagner-Jauregg. Physiologists will find interesting details about Stricker who was, with Ludwig, a leading experimental physiologist. In conclusion I would like to say that Schönbauer and Jantsch, by editing these memoirs, have done a valuable service to European medical history.


Psychoanalysts have apparently neglected this promising field, which offers manifest opportunities for discovering sexual symbolism. Dr. Berg brings forward data from the ceremonies of primitive people to support his finding, in patients treated by psychoanalysis, that patting, brushing, shaving, and cutting one’s hair is a symptom of deep pregenital conflicts connected with the Oedipus complex and castration, which might otherwise have occasioned serious changes in one’s character. Only analysts can judge whether his evidence satisfies them; others will remain sceptical.


This large and expensive book has nothing to recommend it. With few exceptions the contributors fail to say anything new, to organize and express well what they have to say, or to show a mastery of their subject.


This small book assembles the information, previously scattered in a number of individual papers, on a variety of clinical uses for intravenous procaine. The authors themselves have made extensive use of this method of treating various pain-producing states, and have drawn on their own experiences. The main physiological effects of the drug are twofold—production of analgesia and vasodilatation; and from these the therapeutic results
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appear to come. Amongst conditions mentioned in which it may prove useful, are allergic reactions, cardiac arrhythmias due to direct cardiac irritation at operation, and a variety of painful lesions including the acute phase of anterior poliomyelitis and post-traumatic pain states. The method as detailed in the book appears to be safe, and is likely to have a wide application in painful conditions of doubtful aetiology which do not respond adequately to routine analgesics. Its vasodilator effect may also prove widely useful in thrombotic and vasospastic conditions.


This book draws attention to the difficult problem of managing old people who are incontinent. It includes a study of bladder physiology, and demonstrates the troublesome small capacity which these patients often have. The author finds that incontinence may be brought on by insufficient nursing attention to a bedridden patient: once a patient becomes incontinent he is apt to be left out of the bed-pun, so that no attempt is made to re-train what is lost. The author holds out little hope for increasing the capacity of the bladder in these cases, and yet this seems to be worth further study.

It is also maintained that the bladder becomes spastic in spastic paralysis. It seems likely, however, that diminished capacity in these cases may be due more to a reaction to a period of retention and infection than to any direct effect of long tract disease. For the worst cases, the author has been experimenting with a plaster bed from which the excreta fall into a receptacle. It is hard, however, to believe that this will not cause more difficulties than it will cure. However, though the author's views on treatment are sometimes not very imaginative, this book will be useful to geriatric units and others dealing with the problem. The book is extravagantly produced, and is therefore much too expensive for a work of this kind.


This is a symposium with articles written mainly by acknowledged authorities on the subjects treated. Of the 14 articles, eight (zoology, genetics, general medicine, social medicine, neurology, psychology, social anthropology and sociology) deal with aspects of biological science, using the term in its widest sense, and three of these deal directly with sociological problems, while a sociological viewpoint forms an important part of a further three (genetics, general medicine and psychology). This is probably a fair representation of the growing realization in this century of the importance of man's reactions to his fellow men.

The aim of this work is presumably to present to the intelligent amateur both the achievements and the trends of scientific thought which distinguish our times. It is difficult to use the symposium method as a means to this end: to be successful, contributions must be strung together like beads in a necklace. In this volume most of the beads are admirable in themselves, but the string is largely absent. The article on genetics by Dr. Ford, and on zoology by Professor Medawar, certainly succeed in combining facts and viewpoints, while Professor R. A. Fisher's article on statistics, a development which probably gives a more distinctive twentieth century flavour to science than any other, is somehow disappointing. The article on neurology is a misnomer, for the data discussed in it are almost exclusively psychiatric.

The tendency of science at the moment seems to be towards a fragmentation of knowledge, and this book, with its informative but rather isolated essays, is representative of this tendency. However, its publication is also a recognition of the need for integration and synthesis which has been increasingly expressed in the last decade.

BOOKS RECEIVED

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


Co-ordinating Committee on Abstracting and Indexing in the Medical and Biological Sciences. 1951. France: UNESCO. Pp. 92. Price 5s.


