BOOK REVIEWS


This book is a collection of essays on the structure and functions of the temporal lobe. The recent interest aroused in the temporal lobe epilepsies and their possible surgical treatment has evidently prompted the work. The gross anatomy of the lobe and its connexions are considered, and recent work on the rhinencephalon and hippocampal formation are reviewed. The importance of its connexions with other cortical areas, and the fact that it develops in size and complexity as the mammalian scale is ascended, are emphasized. The evidence from physiological neuronography is mentioned which suggests that the lobe has important connexions both with brain-stem centres and with the orbital aspects of the frontal lobe. Professor Gastaut reviews his extensive work on paroxysmal discharges in the temporal cortex and the evidence that these can arise from deeper structures both in the amygdaloid and hippocampal nuclei and also in thalamic and mesencephalic regions, while Moruzzi considers its association with the reticular formation and also takes the opportunity of giving a more general review of the latter’s function. The part played by the temporal lobe in autonomic integration and in the somatic changes associated with emotion are discussed by Professor Monnier. The functions of this region as an auditory reception area and its part in speech and its disturbance in aphasia are fully considered. Recent developments in intracellular recording of both spontaneous and evoked response are briefly discussed. An essay by Grey Walter on the analysis of cortical electrical activity by means of the “toposcope”, and one on the central coordination of posture and movement by McCulloch are also included.

The book will be of value to neurologists, since it assembles much otherwise scattered work. They will, however, have to apply at times a critical faculty which some contributors do not evince.


This is a somewhat unimaginative account of various types of post-traumatic headache, and the forms of treatment considered are mainly concerned with cutting something, with special reference to branches of the trigeminal nerve.


It is over 20 years since this well-known textbook first appeared, and the latest edition maintains the high standard expected. It is no easy matter to keep a textbook up to date, and it is perhaps inevitable that some sections appear to be disappointing. Thus the section on headache (p. 286) gives an inadequate account of the modern methods of investigating and treating head pains. The section on myelitis pays little attention to vascular aetiology; occupational cramps are dismissed as a neurosis; cough syncope is not considered; the section on shoulder girdle neuritis is vague, and in considering epilepsy auras are given little attention.

There is an inaccuracy on p. 179 regarding Bell’s palsy, where it is stated that if reaction of degeneration is complete at three weeks “recovery is unlikely”: in fact, these cases mostly recover quite well by regeneration.

However, it is easy to find something to criticize in a textbook. An enormous amount of information is presented, and this work is still the standard British work on neurology.


This small work reports a clinical study of a series of cases of brain wound of the occipital region. The higher mechanisms such as object agnosia and alexia are specially considered, and the methods used include tachistoscopic examination. The perimetric studies and anatomical details are unfortunately inadequate for full appreciation of the clinical material.


Although many sections of this book have been published independently, it now provides a useful synthesis of Professor Schneider’s current views on clinical psychopathology. They do not differ in essentials from those he put forward 30 years ago, but they have matured in the soil of his clinical experience. Though simply expressed, they embody much reflection and a consistent, well-developed theory which is, however, too abstract to be acceptable to English psychiatrists. In view of Professor Schneider’s unrivalled contributions to the description and clarification of psychopathic personalities, it is of considerable interest to find him here deprecating the use of the term in forensic and other reports because it has come more and more to connote an adverse ethical or social judgment: like “hysteria” it has lost its proper medical significance and incorporated moral values which make it a dangerous word for doctors to use. Types of
psychopathy are in his view very different from diagnoses of disease. He regards all diseases as having a somatic basis, and so he distinguishes sharply between abnormal and morbid; personality can be abnormal without being morbid. The forensic implications of his opinion are far-reaching. On many other crucial issues in psychiatry his views, though opposed to those current among us, bring the problems into sharper focus and offer an intelligent, clinically expert, and coherent alternative.


The width of the gap separating psychopathology in the English-speaking countries from the same subject in German-speaking countries is plainly shown by this thoughtful and ambitious work. The author, a Swiss psychiatrist and a pupil of C. G. Jung, has sought to bring psychology and psychiatry together, making use of "depth-psychology" and Gestalt psychology for the purpose. The aim is not dissimilar from that of certain British and American writers, but the execution is very different. The extensive output of psychological research into the abnormal as well as the normal during the last 15 years is given very scanty recognition, and national or linguistic boundaries seem to be an obstruction to the writer's outlook: thus such notable contributors to psychopathology as Eugene Minkowski, Clérambault, and Henri Ey are not mentioned. In spite of these limitations, the book deserves the attention of English readers because it does not run along well-worn tracks, it is scholarly, and provides an orderly, clinically relevant statement of the theoretical position held by an important group of Swiss-German psychopathologists.


Dr. Sullivan powerfully furthered the growth in the United States of a form of "dynamic" psychiatry and psychology which tried to integrate psychoanalysis with the social sciences. Like Karen Horney and Eric Fromm, Sullivan stressed the cultural forces which influence relations between people and promote the successive stages of mental development. He was averse from speculative excursions, but formulated, on the basis of his clinical experience, a systematic theory of interpersonal relations. Personality, he taught, derives from the continuous impact of personal and social forces upon the growing individual, who is mainly concerned with the pursuit of satisfactions and of security. Psychological troubles arise because the aim of security is not attained, or because there is conflict between the search for satisfactions and pressure to conform to the cultural pattern of the milieu. Elaborately worked out in the two sets of lectures which these books contain, Sullivan's views offer a stimulating and intelligible alternative to the abstruse complexity of orthodox psychoanalysis.


This excellent inquiry shows once more how experimental psychology is coming into its own again in psychiatric research after the long period of neglect which followed the researches of Kraepelin, Rivers, and others whom Wundt had directly or indirectly influenced. Dr. King decided to study the fine movement patterns in which strength is secondary to speed or precision. Three factors were investigated, concerned respectively with speed of single reaction, speed of stereotyped oscillatory movement (tapping), and precision (manual dexterity). These factors were examined in normal, chronic schizophrenic, and neurotic subjects by means of a battery of suitable tests. The schizophrenics were retarded in their performance on all tests when compared with the normals, and their degree of retardation corresponded to the clinical severity of their disturbed behaviour. In a lucid and erudite discussion of the findings Dr. King concludes that the faulty psychomotor performance of the patients indicates a disturbance in the basic process of adaptation effected through motor adjustment to the environment. The monograph is, within its stated limits, a model of systematic experimental inquiry into a facet of mental disorder.


Since the publication of his textbook of psychotherapy in 1918 Dr. Schultz has been the most authoritative German spokesman of this aspect of psychiatry. In spite of comparative isolation he has maintained a lively interest in developments in other countries, and has adapted his conceptions of neurosis to bring them closer to those now prevailing elsewhere. His reading has been wide, as this introduction to medical psychology shows. It has, in common with most other books on the subject, a very large allowance of words to go with a pittance of assured fact and principle, but the seasoned reader expects that. Professor Schultz's general standpoint is close to that of Kretschmer, but with a stronger infusion of psychoanalytic ideas.


This book approaches psychiatry from the psychological viewpoint, but avoids the gross extravagancies of psychoanalytical doctrine. Much of the space is taken up with emotional development and there are
good chapters on the psychiatric problems of the crucial epochs in an individual's life, and the various tensions which can develop within the family group. The psychoses are dealt with more briefly.


This is a short textbook of psychiatry which clearly and concisely covers most of the fundamental facts of psychiatry and those branches of psychology which are relevant to the subject. The psychology is perhaps a little old-fashioned; for example, the author speaks of "instincts" where most psychologists would use the term "drives". A more serious criticism is the inadequate treatment of the neuroses. As is inevitable in a short textbook, it is dogmatic, but this is an advantage for the people for whom it is primarily intended—nursing and medical students.


This textbook, previously the work of Dr. Curran and the late Eric Guttmann, has been extensively rewritten and enlarged. Whereas the first edition, 18 years ago, contained 188 pages, there are here 407. The section on psychiatry in wartime has been dropped, and fuller details of physical methods of treatment included. The general features which characterized the book are unchanged: the exposition is on traditional clinical lines, psychopathology and psychotherapy receive rather cavalier treatment, recent work by psychologists and other such investigators is hardly referred to, the style is clear and straightforward with occasional lapses into the sprightly and the frivolous, and the descriptions of syndromes are good. And in all, the book remains an excellent primer of unpretentious, "down-to-earth" psychiatry.


The merit of this book lies in its breadth and tolerance. Many texts on child psychology concern themselves with development as seen from the instinctual or psychoanalytic point of view, others with the measurement of abilities and the description of behaviour: few give a fair and comprehensive review of the whole rather uncoordinated field of knowledge and speculation. Dr. Jersild covers the extensive literature with discriminating care, though a more critical exposition of the material in the three chapters on emotional development would have been to the book's advantage. The book is evidently intended mainly for teachers and others interested in educational psychology: this may account for the inadequacies of the last chapter, "Personality Problems and the Search for Self", which is poorly documented and superficial, if read from the clinical standpoint. Conversely many child psychiatrists could profit by reading the three chapters on social relationships and social behaviour.


This is a new translation of one of Freud's major works. It is a very comprehensive edition containing the changes and additions made by Freud in later years. There is an excellent introduction together with extensive bibliography and indexes.

So far as the translation itself is concerned, hardly any sentence is the same as in Brill's edition. The changes make this book longer but more readable.

The translating and editing of this work has evidently been a labour of love for Mr. Strachey and this is reflected in its excellence and comprehensiveness.


This book gives short biographies of 21 "great neurologists", 10 of whom are Germans. The term "Nervenärzte" embraces psychiatrists, and Freud, Jung, Bleuler, Kraepelin, and Jaspers are included. Sherrington, Pavlov, and Cajal are also represented. Each essay is illustrated with a portrait and the book is well produced. Some of the essays are by acknowledged authorities on their subject—Gordon Holmes on Hughlings Jackson, for instance.


This little book consists mainly of a reprint of the original "Essay on the Shaking Palsy" by Dr. James Parkinson, and a short biographical essay on the author by Dr. W. H. McMenemey. In addition there are notes on the clinical features of "Parkinsonism" by Dr. Francis Walshe and on the pathology of the condition by Dr. J. G. Greenfield.

Parkinson seems to have been a man of many interests, which included an active part in the radical politics of his day (1755-1824). His essay illustrates both the advantages and the pitfalls of the purely clinical observational method for, as he says himself, anatomical (post-mortem) studies were not available.


This book gives a biographical note on Charcot and brief synopses or reviews of his major medical works. The biographical details are scrappy, and although they are filled out by quotations from his pupils they do not give any clear impression of Charcot's personality. It is fairly certain that much criticism must have been aroused among his colleagues over the Salpétrière demonstrations in hypnotism—especially as stage hypnotists of the time would advertise performances.
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“après les expériences de Charcot” ; but nothing of this emerges in this colourless essay. A vivid description of his death during an attack of cardiac asthma is given.

After some 70 pages of biography 110 are given to a review of his writings. These contain interesting brief résumés of his work, but there is no attempt at critical appreciation.


This is said to be the most representative selection of Pavlov’s work yet published in English, and as such will be welcomed by students of brain mechanisms. Pavlov systematically waged war against those who insisted on separating mind from brain, and psychology from physiology. This brought Pavlov into conflict with some views expressed by Sherrington, and also with many conceptions expounded by psychiatrists, and his comments are vividly reported in the chapters of this book. Unfortunately there is no index to assist reference.


The Institute of Psychiatry now plays a leading part in the furtherance of many of the research problems related to psychiatry and neurophysiology, and the launching of a monograph series is a happy indication of the strength of the Institute and the amount of research being done. This Maudsley Monograph No. 1 is excellently presented and published, yet the cost is low when related to other comparable series.

With regard to the monograph itself, suicide being unequivocal and notifiable, it is a most suitable basis on which to study the relationship between human behaviour and different forms of neighbourhood in London. The effect of social isolation, social mobility, poverty, misfortune, social class, unemployment, divorce, illegitimacy, and mental illness are all presented statistically, and thus provide an invaluable insight into many modern social problems.


These articles, collected from 19 journals and reprinted without change, lack cohesion and orderly sequence; the level at which the writers present their evidence and conclusions varies widely; there is no subject index; and there is much repetition of commonplace. Although a few of the authors are distinguished, the compilation is too uneven and unplanned to be useful either to the expert in this field or to the uninformed reader.


There have recently been many points of biochemical research which have direct contact with clinical conditions of the nervous system. The copper and amino-acid metabolism upsets of Kinnier Wilson’s disease, the enzyme and co-enzyme system abnormalities in certain forms of neuropathy, and the abnormality of cholinesterase content in excised cerebral scars are some examples, and there are many more.

A book dealing specifically with the biochemistry of the nervous system is therefore timely, and this is one of several produced recently. It covers the ground adequately from the clinician’s point of view, and its range of references makes it useful also as an introduction to a rather wider field of biochemistry in medicine.


This small book reports the clinical features of thallium poisoning, and emphasizes its sinister possibilities. Polyneuritis is the commonest neurological effect and may cause death by respiratory failure. Thallium compounds are all too easily obtainable and are used in rat poisons.


This book is based on the Symposium on Electrochemistry in Biology and Medicine held in New York in 1953. There are 19 separate contributions which present modern thought on electrochemical problems of living processes.

BOOKS RECEIVED

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


Mental Health. (2s.) Published by The Twentieth Century, London. May, 1956.