BOOK REVIEWS


In this first volume of the new series of Oxford Neurological Monographs, Dr. Ritchie Russell and Dr. Michael Espir present an analysis of 280 cases of traumatic aphasia from the records of the Military Hospital for Head Injuries at Oxford. The material is arranged to throw light first, on the anatomical extent of the speech territory; secondly, the relations between laterality of lesion, handedness, and aphasia; and thirdly, the incidence of aphasia in relation to the presence or absence of certain other neurological signs, in particular motor and sensory loss and visual field defects. In later chapters, the authors give consideration to the different types of aphasia and to the occasional incidence of relatively circumscribed defects in reading, writing, and memory. The final chapter provides a concise summary of the main findings and conclusions.

The findings regarding the anatomical extent of the speech territory are in general consistent with those of earlier studies. It is true that there is considerable overlap between the sites of left hemisphere wounds which did, and which did not, produce aphasia but there is an undoubted predominance of the former in the temporoparietal and (to a lesser extent) the posterior frontal region. It is also noteworthy that the authors, unlike Conrad, find a striking association between classical motor aphasia and wounds of the lower part of the left Rolandoic area. This would have given lively satisfaction to Paul Broca.

As regards handedness and cerebral dominance, the findings in 79 left-handed or ambidextrous patients (from a total material of 916 cases) are for the most part in keeping with other recent studies of aphasia in sinistrals. They indicate that the dominant hemisphere in patients who are fully or partly left-handed is much more often the left than the right, though in some such cases odd or atypical syndromes may be encountered. The authors point out that in view of the fact that temporary aphasia following a wound of either hemisphere was no more common in sinistrals than in dextrals (in fact it was rather less), their findings lend no support to the hypothesis of bilateral speech representation in left-handed or ambidextrous subjects. (At the same time, it could be argued that if a function is represented bilaterally, it is less likely to be impaired by a unilateral lesion of either hemisphere. The comparatively lower incidence of aphasia in the left-handed patients as compared with the right-handed after wounds of either hemisphere might thus be construed as evidence for bilateral representation. It should be said, however, that the difference is relatively small and doubtfully significant.)

As regards the incidence of aphasia in relation to other focal signs, the evidence adduced is of great importance not only from the anatomical point of view but also in relation to the analysis of specific defects in language. Of even wider interest, perhaps, is the author's concept of 'central aphasia', which they consider to result from wounds in the central (temporo-parietal) region of the speech territory. In these cases, the aphasia, which may at first be total, is said to involve all aspects of language and to be associated with marked intellectual loss. It thus goes well beyond the traditional concept of 'central aphasia', which we owe to Lichtheim, and which differed little from Wernicke's original conception of sensory aphasia (defect of comprehension, paraphasia, alexia, and agraphia). In view of the fact that the concept of central aphasia has recently been revived in a form closer to the original, it may be feared that some confusion will result. (In the history of phasia, unfortunately, this is nothing new.) At all events, the authors have brought out perhaps more clearly than ever before the catastrophic effects of lesions in the dominant temporo-parietal area on higher mental processes.

In a penultimate chapter, a very interesting, if small, group of cases with specific defect of memory (with or without defect of speech) is considered. These are cases of exceptional importance and should be closely studied in relation to other recent work suggesting a focal basis to amnesic states. The authors rightly stress the role of damage to the hippocampal system and make some interesting suggestions as to its possible role in the storage of information.

The main interest of this most valuable study is in relation to the localization of defects in speech and kindred functions. Whatever our views on the localization of function, accurate knowledge of the localization of lesions producing specific dysphasic syndromes can hardly fail to clarify our understanding of the cerebral basis of speech. One may regret, perhaps, that the psychological observation is often scanty, but given the information on record the authors could hardly have done better. Their work, too, points an important moral: case records should not only be stored but used. One may hope that others will follow their example.

O. L. ZANGWILL


This volume reports the proceedings of a Symposium on nervous inhibition held at Friday Harbor in June 1960. The choice of subject illustrates the great importance attached to a study of the physiology of all kinds of inhibition. As Sir John Eccles writes in a foreword, '... these papers illustrate the many types of investigation that are leading to new concepts in regard to the workings of the nervous system'. The participants included many distinguished scientists, physiologists, anatomists, zoologists, biologists, and pharmacologists from many
countries. The volume will be welcome by those who look for authoritative reports on current research in this field.


Serious research on the nervous system inevitably involves highly technical studies devoted to a narrow field. Professor Glees has himself contributed to such studies but his thoughts travel widely and because of this, his book will be found by many to be a most useful work of reference. The German edition has already been reviewed in these columns and many will wish to have this English edition at hand. The book is beautifully produced and the 240 figures are well chosen, clear, and helpful.


Between 1928 and 1932 a comprehensive 'system of psychiatry' was published, written entirely by German authors, and surveying the whole field of psychiatric knowledge with extraordinary fullness and authority. The 11 volumes of that Handbuch der Geisteskrankheiten succeeded and surpassed the similarly comprehensive Handbuch edited by Aschaffenburg, the bulk of which appeared between 1912 and 1915. It could hardly have been foreseen that the unquestioned preeminence of German psychiatry, of which these ambitious productions were the proof, and which had been undisturbed by defeat in the First World War, would be undermined and destroyed in the years of National Socialist dominance.

Since the end of the last war, however, strenuous efforts have been made to recapture some of the lost ground. The volume now under review attests the vigour of certain branches of German and Swiss psychiatry, and the enormous amount of detail that is accumulated by psychiatric investigators while the major problems of causation, pathology, and treatment still remain obscure.

The volume is devoted to clinical psychiatry and is fittingly edited by the late Professor Mayer-Gross. In his foreword he says that it is not free from the inevitable faults and bias of overspecialization which characterizes modern medicine but that it gives a faithful picture of current clinical psychiatry, with its emphasis on treatment.

The first section deals with endogenous psychoses; two of the contributors are Swiss (Max Müller and J. Wysch) and the others are Weitbrecht, H. H. Meyer, and Kleist's former associate, K. Leonhard, who provides a valuable chapter on atypical psychoses. A relatively brief section on neuroses is in the hands of Hans Binder of Zürich, Erwin Stengel of Sheffield, and Pierre Schneider of Lausanne; a fuller treatment of the psychopathology and psychotherapy of these conditions will be contained in a separate volume.

After five chapters on alcoholism and other addictions by Swiss authorities and Sariola of Venezuela, a lengthy section, comprising half of the whole volume, is devoted to organic psychoses, epilepsy, and mental defect. The article on symptomatic psychoses, by the late Professor Konrad of Göttingen, is the most compact and informative contribution in the whole volume. The final section consists of two articles dealing respectively with the psychiatry of old age and that of childhood.

The volume, which is very well produced, is a valuable work of reference, uneven as any such compilation must be, but ensuring access to research and findings that are often overlooked by the psychiatrists of English-speaking countries.


With the collaboration of a psychoanalyst, Dr. Brisset, and a physician with much mental hospital experience, Dr. Bernard, Henri Ey has produced a comprehensive modern conspectus of psychiatry. It is distinctively French in outlook and terminology but shows a wide acquaintance with the relevant literature and practice of other countries. It is well documented, the style of exposition is clear, and the balance which Dr. Ey tells us he aimed at in expounding both theoretical and practical matters is admirably maintained.

The book is divided into eight parts, the first four of which account for more than three-quarters of the whole work. These are respectively concerned with psychology, methods of examination and symptomatology, clinical features of the various 'functional' mental disorders, and somatic processes which produce mental disturbance. The remaining quarter of the book deals with environmental factors, psychosomatic medicine, treatment, and legal and administrative questions.


Professor Kolle occupies the most exalted chair of psychiatry in Europe, for he is the successor of Kraepelin in Munich. In spite of this and the traditional solemnity of professorial writing in Germany, he uses an easy, simple style, and expresses his personal opinion without ambiguity when a matter is controversial or a popular fallacy needs to be exposed. The text shows that German psychiatry remains true to its historical preference for careful observation and sobriety in interpretation, as well as for caution in therapeutic claims or expectations. In the well-written section on psychotherapy Professor Kolle is conservative yet realistic in stating the demands which modern developments in treatment make upon the conscientious psychiatrist.


The increasing interest in mental health and mental
illness has been responsible for a spate of publications in the past few years. Dr. Stallworthy is a careful author who has read widely round his subject and writes lucidly about it. His two books are among the better of their kind. "The Facts of Mental Health and Illness" is written for the intelligent layman and covers a wide variety of subjects ranging from the elements of neurophysiology to the function of mental hospitals. His other book, 'A Manual of Psychiatry', succeeds in compressing a great deal of information and in skirting the quicksands of psychiatric theory: for these reasons it is more suitable for nurses than for medical students or doctors for whom there are now fuller and more comprehensive texts dealing with those more controversial topics which are essential to an understanding of modern psychiatry.


Dr. Colby, a cool-headed American psychoanalyst, has evidently read many books and articles on scientific method, out of which he has distilled the present summarizing exposition of current principles. He suggests how these might be applied to psychoanalytical observations. In so far as he is preparing the way for a stringent experimental inquiry into the axioms and findings of psychoanalysts, his work is praiseworthy, but it would be more effective in achieving its aim if it contained some examples of scientific experiments that had been actually carried out to show that psychoanalytic hypotheses can be formulated and tested satisfactorily.


Communication between people with diverse training and terminology is notoriously difficult, but the discussions reported here between paediatricians, psychiatrists, and philosophers suggest more confusion than usual. 'Psychosomatic' is an adjective which can be associated with muddle and naive assertion or with informed speculation and inquiry; it is fortunately possible to study the relation between mental and somatic happenings without getting involved in the tangle into which the 'psychosomatic idea' evidently beguiled many of the speakers on this occasion. Some of the papers are faithful though unexciting expositions of standard findings and opinions. Miss Anna Freud's straightforward replies to questions on the first day of the meeting stand out as the most impressive contribution in their refreshing and sensible lucidity and their clear derivation from much experience and reflection. Among other wise remarks she regretted that paediatricians were more interested in the way psychological causes could bring about bodily changes than in the effect which indisputably physical illness might have on the child's mind. The discussions displayed ample grounds for such regret.


This book is the first volume of a promised trilogy devoted to the history of British psychiatry and deals with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The method employed is that of the bio-bibliographical sketch of many of the main figures of the time concerned with mental disease. This is an excellent vehicle for conveying the development of thought and practice in psychiatry, especially when the biographical details are sufficient, as they are here, to give an impression also of the general social milieu in which development is occurring. The result is a book which is of such general interest that it will appeal to both laymen and doctors. Brevity occasionally imposes dogmatism and there is the very occasional misprint: but in general the book is accurate, scholarly, and entertaining. Although the historian of medicine will find it of special value, it is to be hoped that aspiring psychiatrists may also read it. Its historical perspective will be a pleasant corrective to any narrowness of outlook that specialist may encourage. The period of the next volume should provide equally interesting material, but the third volume about more modern times may prove more testing for the author. On present showing, however, we may look forward to the complete work with confidence.

The book is well produced and profusely illustrated with portraits, sketches, and pictures of various incidentia of the medical practice of the time.


This volume attempts to cover all those aspects of the chemical pathology of the nervous system which were the subject of active research at the time of the symposium. It is noteworthy that almost half of the book is concerned with research into psychiatric disorders.

Many chapters deal with specific and highly esoteric problems in neurochemistry and histochemistry; but in addition there are excellent general reviews on metabolic disorders of nutritional origin (Sinclair), demyelinating disorders (Adams and Richardson), neurochemistry of convulsive states (Towers), biochemical theories of schizophrenia (Kety), and the whole field of biochemical investigation into mental disorder is covered systematically. Such sections make it likely that the book will remain for many years a valuable source of reference for biochemists, neurologists, and psychiatrists.


This is a very clearly presented and illustrated small book which will be useful to students of neuroanatomy.
Book reviews

The much-needed coordinating activities of the World Federation of Neurology are being felt in many fields; none of them can be more desirable than the establishment of periodicals of high quality. For some time it has been felt that the only existing journal devoted to neuropathology is overloaded. The Commissions on Neuropathology and on Comparative Neuropathology of the World Federation of Neurology have seen this challenge and sponsored Acta Neuropathologica: it will be published at indefinite intervals by Springer-Verlag of Berlin-Wilmersdorf. The members of the editorial board have been selected from many countries and the managing editor is Professor F. Seitelberger. In their preface the editors feel that without the help of the newer techniques of experimental biology, histochemistry, and electron microscopy the cause of neuropathology of the classical morphological pattern is likely to be defeated. It is to provide an international forum common to all these disciplines that the editors have attuned their minds: to this end articles will be accepted for publication in English, French, or German.
The first number, dated October 1961, sets a high standard: it contains five main articles and one short case report.

New methods of using indwelling electrodes to study brain mechanisms have in the last 10 years opened up fresh and profitable fields of research. Of exceptional interest are the studies concerned with the cerebral mechanisms which influence behaviour and learning. Over 50 contributors have helped to make this book a valuable record of research. It is perhaps regrettable that summaries have only been written at the end of a few of the 40 chapters. In general, however, this is an excellent and authoritative presentation.

Forty papers by 66 contributors make detailed comment on this book impossible. They cover a wide range and are grouped in sections dealing with the normal and myasthenic neuromuscular junctions, possible mechanisms, clinical problems, factors contributing to exacerbations, pathology, medical therapy and thymectomy, carotid sinus denervation and crisis.
Some of the most interesting material relates to conditions resembling myasthenia. The papers by Lambert and his associates on the clinical and electrical findings in the myasthenic syndrome associated with bronchial neoplasm, and by Schwab and Viets on clinical testing in fatigue syndromes with similarities to myasthenia gravis may be mentioned as examples.
The bibliography is extremely full, and the publication is a most useful review of current knowledge of the clinical and pathological features of the condition.

The Swedish Sterilization Act of 1941 allows sterilization on eugenic, social, or medical grounds. This book is concerned with a follow-up study of 225 women resident in Stockholm who in the year 1951 applied for sterilization.

SCANDINAVIAN SOCIETY OF NEUROSURGERY

The 16th annual meeting of the Scandinavian Society of Neurosurgery will take place at the Amtssygehuset, Odense, Denmark, on Monday, 27 August, and Tuesday, 28 August 1962.
Participation and hotel reservations must be arranged through Dr. C. F. Bisgaard, M.D., Neurosurgical Department, Amtssygehuset, Odense, Denmark.

THE FULTON SOCIETY

During the International Congress of Neurology at Rome, a meeting of the Fulton Society was held and it was decided to have a symposium every two years on the topics to which Dr. Fulton made contributions. The first one will be held in 1963 at the same time and place as the American Neurological Association meeting is held. The subject will be 'Motor and premotor areas'. Further information from Dr. Victor Soriano, Calle Buenos Aires 363, Montevideo, Uruguay.