This book takes an unusual approach to neuroectodermal tumours in that it is devoted almost entirely to their macroscopic features and their microscopical appearances in silver carbonate preparations. It is, therefore, of some academic interest, but unfortunately no attempt has been made to relate the patterns described to those based on more conventional and much more widely used histological techniques. It is only the classification adopted that can account for as much space being devoted to astroblastoma as to glioblastoma. The authors have clearly made a most detailed study of silver carbonate preparations from neuroectodermal tumours but, although it is stated repeatedly that this technique allows a much more accurate identification of cell types than the conventional techniques used by most neuropathologists, it is difficult to accept the many dogmatic statements unsupported by tangible evidence or logical argument.

The book is prolifically illustrated (this may partly compensate for the brevity of the gross descriptions of the tumours), but many are repetitive. As the standard of illustrations in general is high, it is surprising that the book contains a few of unusually poor quality.

It is interesting to note the application of phase contrast techniques to silver carbonate preparations, and the chapter on techniques may be of value to a few, but this book is not likely to be of much practical use to clinicians or pathologists.

J. HUME ADAMS


This is a most useful little book, ideal for students, nurses, and the increasing number of other staff, medical and ancillary, who are now concerned with the problems of head injury care. The chapters are well sprinkled with original line drawings (albeit some of them miniatures), and by crisp notes on actual patients forming vivid clinical vignettes. In spite of the simplification a lot of information is conveyed, including a smattering of history, and some chapters end with selected references.

The author is an Australian neurosurgeon with an international reputation, but whose contact with the outback has kept his feet firmly on the ground. His book is, therefore, ideal for the surgeon in Britain or any other country where the majority of head injuries must be treated in what might be termed the neurosurgical outback.

W. BRYAN JENNETT


It seems impossible to review this book without falling into those very pitfalls in assessment which the author criticizes in diagnostic procedures themselves. The book makes the analogy of the sick organ as the burning glass of the whole ‘constellation’ of disease factors in the man, and the sick or defective man as that of his environment. It does so with the use of case histories of children suffering from defects in speech and hearing, and, because of this very fact, while one accepts the necessity for communication for the development of the healthy adult, it does deal with problems of social, family, and patient adaptation and slow re-conditioning of the personality. It leaves out vast areas of acute or degenerative disease where such techniques, though not irrelevant, are hardly practical for the doctor aiming at rapid diagnosis. From a philosophical standpoint then, the book is a valuable one and serves to remind the diagnostician of the vast areas in the individual and his environment which exist even if his limited resources do not allow him to explore them to the full.

I found it a stimulating and enjoyable work.

R. N. ANTEBI

THE PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION By Ian Stevenson (Pp. 234; 60s.) Churchill: London. 1969. This book is the first for many years written in English on this topic. Professor Stevenson in his preface states, quite properly, that although our diagnostic categories still have much value ‘diagnosis is no longer such an important goal as it once was’ and ‘the psychiatric examination pays as much attention to the thoughts, content and the motivations of the patient as it does to his abnormal behaviour and mental processes’.

This attitude underlies the author’s approach to his task. Although the mental examination which he describes follows the orthodoxy pattern, he does indicate how to import into the examination a search for the dynamic factors which determine symptoms. This is most clearly indicated in the chapter on the recognition of common psychiatric syndromes in which he gives examples from his experience of the connection between somatic symptoms and emotional events which were discovered during psychiatric examination and history-taking. Some more run-of-the-mill examples of the value of a dynamic approach would have been useful. Perhaps the author will consider expanding this topic in a later edition. The chapter on the techniques of examination gives good advice on a number of points and, in particular, how to avoid humiliating the patient and thus to preserve a good psychotherapeutic relationship. Apart from this he presents a comprehensive summary of the tests which can be used by the doctor or by the psychologist to complete the examination. The book is to be welcomed for the instruction it gives on the psychiatric examination which constitutes, and will remain, the essential skill of the psychiatrist.


The second edition of Dr. Clifford Allen’s authoritative textbook brings his material into line with recent developments in the clinical and medico-legal aspects of psychosexual disorders. In a comparatively obscure area of clinical psychiatry, the author writes from an acceptably eclectic standpoint, with clarity and at times almost colloquially. All the well-known psychosexual deviations, and many of the more exotic variety, are discussed in a systematic manner, and the treatment possibilities highlighted. Classification of these disorders is basically
DRUGS AND THE BRAIN  


The old jibe about the lack of treatment in neurology and psychiatry is no longer true. Quite suddenly there are so many drugs available that few practitioners have been able to keep up to date with them. The rapidly expanding knowledge of cerebral physiology comes just in time to systematize knowledge of drug action. Certainly there will be wrong steps, misleading analogies, and false conclusions, but the degree of understanding is already impressive. This book, therefore, timely.

Like all books of multiple authorship it has its high points and its parts which were better unwritten, but the general result is good. The thirty chapters are grouped into parts: (1) basic considerations; (2) psychochemotherapy; (3) 'memory enhancers'; (4) LSD; (5) alcoholism; (6) drug abuse. This is a useful collection. Anticonvulsants are not dealt with.

DAS DEPRESSIVE SYNDROM  


This volume contains the proceedings of an international symposium on depression held in Berlin in February, 1968. The papers presented by 61 contributors cover many of the important aspects of this common affec­tive disorder. The contents are set out under 12 general headings: biochemistry, genetic aspects, autonomic variation, course and periodicity, depressive defect states, transcultural aspects, personality profiles, research methodology, classification, psychopathology and clinical features, psychosomatic and psychotherapeutic aspects, and physical treatment. Each section is followed by a brief but pertinent discussion, and an appendix containing the various rating scales for depression is found at the end of the book.

In his closing remarks at the end of the conference, Dr. Lehman was tempted to compare the event to an intellectual marathon race and something of this impression is transmitted to the reader on first opening the pages of this volume. Like many publications of this kind, however, it is not to be read from cover to cover, but to be sampled and digested at leisure. The format enables the reader to do so with ease and the general production of the book is of a high standard. With one exception, all the papers are in German and a summary in English would have been helpful to English readers not conversant with the German language.

KURT SCHAPIRA

AN APPROACH TO COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH  


This short book by Gerald Caplan, first published in 1961, makes a welcome appearance in paperback form. During the intervening years, Dr. Caplan’s course of instruction in community mental health has become one of the most widely known in the U.S.A., and indeed in the world. For anyone who contemplates studying with him at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center, in Boston, this book can still serve as valuable preliminary reading; and for those who cannot hope to do so, it provides a useful introduction to his teaching.

Although it does tend, in American style, to brandish terms like ‘conceptual framework’, these are mercifully few. From the start, the reader is confronted with concrete situations such as juvenile delinquency, family crises, pregnancy, bereavement. After looking at the personal and social contexts of these events, Caplan discusses in very practical terms what the nurse, the social worker, and the family doctor can do towards preventing emotional disorders. In a concluding chapter on ‘Comprehensive Community Psychiatry’ he spells out, again in very clear, practical terms, the basic services and facilities which a modern community ought to provide, in order to deal effectively with its mental health problems.

G. M. CARSTAIRS

EPILEPSIE FIBEL  


This short book addressed to the general practitioner is packed with useful information. The classification of the epilepsies is dealt with in pragmatic manner with the admission that neither the symptomatology of the fit, nor aetiology nor electrophysiology alone provide a useful schema. The greater part of the book is devoted to practical problems of dealing with patients suffering from epilepsy. This includes genetic counselling, vocational guidance, and treatment. In keeping with the author’s main interest, epilepsy in childhood receives special attention. It is unavoidable that in a short book some dogmatic statements are made which can be questioned; an example of this is the statement that sleep is the only useful method of activation; or that sclerosis of a sector of the hippocampus is a consequence of the fits. Nor does the reviewer believe that EEG supervision of treatment is essential. The author regards normalization of the EEG as one of the aims of treatment, a view not shared by many British neurologists. As one often finds, the references to literature in the author’s language are up to date, whereas references to authors writing in other languages are sparse and mostly old.

However, as a book which a general practitioner can consult when faced with a case of epilepsy, it is sensible and reliable.

S. L. LAST

SUBCORTICAL CORRELATES OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR  

A Psychological Study of Thalamic and Basal Ganglia Surgery. By Manuel Riklan and Eric Levita. (Pp. xii +