Reviews and Notices of Books.

The Mechanism of the Brain and the Function of the Frontal Lobes.
By LEONARDO BIANCHI, Professor of Psychiatry and Neuropathology in the Royal University of Naples. Translated by JAMES H. MACDONALD, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.F.P.S. (Glasg.), MacKintosh Lecturer in Psychological Medicine, Glasgow University, with a Foreword by C. LLOYD MORGAN, LL.D., D.Sc., F.R.S., Emeritus Professor in the University of Bristol. Pp. 348. Illustrated. 1922. Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone. 21s. net.

This book, written by a psychiatrist who has spent the best part of fifty years in close observation of the structure and functions of the cerebral mechanism, contains an epitome of his life's work with the conclusions to which he has been led in the light of his own researches and the observation of others.

The book opens with a chapter of sixty-seven pages devoted to the evolution of the nervous system, in which are revealed the author's fundamental conceptions of the mental activities. Professor Bianchi is a man of science who is in touch with modern researches in bio-chemistry and physics and seeks in the history of natural evolution a continuous line from the simplest inorganic phenomena to the complex behaviour of nervously integrated animal life and the conscious activities of man, in whom Nature becomes most fully revealed to herself through the intermediary of the nervous system, particularly the frontal lobes. These structures, he believes, are the seat of the highest mental functions, and elaborate the intellectual and emotional products of the rest of the brain. In support of his contention he records the results of his own experimental work upon monkeys. The protocols of these experiments are presented with a wealth of detail concerning the character changes observed after mutilation which is not only engaging in itself, but supports the author's contention that negative results after frontal destruction reported by other observers may well have been due to a limited perception of these finer points.

There can be no question but that these experiments of Professor Bianchi upon the monkey are of much greater value in throwing light upon the functions of the frontal lobes in man than those of other recent workers in this field who have confined their attentions to the rat.

The latter half of the book is concerned with the problems of language, intelligence, emotion, and consciousness, which are discussed from the point of view which we have already seen developed in the earlier chapters. The author distinguishes between emotion and sentiment. The former, in his
view, is originally a primitive function of the nature of a tropism and is
developed in relation especially to the increasing complexity of the sensory
functions of the nervous system, and is influenced by the activities of the
sensory cortex. The sentiments are the logical development of the emotions
in relation to the intellectual progress which permits of those cortical repre-
sentations and reconstructions, experiential and imaginative, which are the
basis of abstract thinking. He brings forward evidence from his experiments
on monkeys to show that the emotions are a function of the kinaesthetic zones
of the cortex, and the sentiments of the frontal lobes.

The final chapter on consciousness is perhaps the most interesting of
the whole book. While the value of Freud's work is in no wise belittled, the
author concludes that the content of the unconscious mind is in the main
controlled by the conscious mental activities, and that the explanation of
mental disorders is to be sought rather in disturbance of the higher functions
than abnormalities at a lower level.

Especially at a time when the cellars of psychological medicine are filled
with immature and flashy stuff is it a delight to find a sound, ripe vintage
such as this.

C. P. S.

The Psychology of Self-consciousness. By Julia Turner, B.A. (Lond.).
Pp. xii + 243. 1923. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd. 6s. 6d. net.

Herein are presented certain ideas of the conceptual life which it is hoped
will appeal more particularly to teachers, ministers of religion, and educa-
tionalists. Evidently great enthusiasm has inspired the writer into highly
speculative realms where scientific thought has little place. The title to many
will be somewhat misleading. Psychopathologists, we fear, will find little
of value to them in this volume.

C. S. R.

London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd. 7s. 6d. net.

This volume is intended as a practical exposition of the subject for the
layman, so that technical language has been employed as little as possible.
We can hardly consider, however, that the author's treatment of his subject
would lead to an intelligent understanding of it by an unversed reader,
though many useful psychological conceptions are dealt with. The chapter
on the endocrine glands is unscientific in that highly speculative ideas of the
relation between them and mental phenomena are here taken as accepted
facts, whereas our real knowledge on this point is but scanty. Great belief,
too, is expressed in auto-suggestion, of the scientific validity of which we
are becoming increasingly doubtful. The latter half of the book is devoted
to the application of the principles discussed to everyday life. Thinking
that among many of his readers there may be some interested in the utilization
of the 'new psychology' to business advertising and selling, this theme is
somewhat singularly handled in a final chapter. A short bibliography is
appended.

C. S. R.