The second part of the book contains equally interesting and possibly less well recognised facts in respect of the causation of spinal injuries at birth. There are references at the end of each section, but unfortunately no index.

S. A. K. W.


To his volume entitled Personality, Dr. Gordon has written a companion one, dealing on a larger scale with the neurotic personality, and analysing along interesting lines the components in the ‘make-up’ of that individual or clinical type. Semiology and treatment are examined in considerable detail, and the opportunity is taken of summarising and criticising various current practices in respect of the latter, and of discussing the pathological physiology of the former.

From the nosological standpoint much space is given to anxiety states, obsessions, and hysteria, and investigation here is especially careful and often illuminating, even if open to modification in several particulars. The phenomenon of defective inhibition of the antagonists deserves more consideration as a frequent hysterical motor symptom or sign than is given it. Various trophic and vascular changes accompanying hysterical phenomena are stated to be secondary, “not themselves hysterical,” and dependent simply on “immobility and disuse.” To this conclusion there are obvious objections; the part played by the neurovascular system in the actual manifestation of hysterical symptoms cannot be gainsaid. The author holds that anxiety states are “the invariable accompaniment of conflict within the personality,” but we may ask whether he has considered the possibility of identical syndromes arising at other levels. Is “epilepsy” of bulbar centres inconceivable? And what of repercussion from structurally diseased viscera on these bulbar centres? These conditions are clinically indistinguishable from “anxiety states” yet have a different etiology.

The book is stimulating because there is much in it that is suggestive rather than established; this accounts to some extent at least for the probability that it will teach the reader most if he preserves himself an open mind in regard to not a few interpretations and conclusions. It is well written in a lucid style and has a wide appeal.

A number of slips seem to have escaped notice. “An hysterical” this or that pulls up the reader too often, and we may remind Dr. Gordon that Dejerine spelt his name without accents and that “Korsikoff” is a misspelling. “Anorhexia” is also a slip that needs correction.

The difficult and still rather obscure subject of hypnosis is being slowly invaded from the physiological and clinicopathological side, as has appeared inevitable to those whose knowledge of organic neurology has for long made them impatient with the purely psychological approach to it. Phenomena in a number of respects comparable to those of the hypnotic state are met with under disease conditions of a very different kind. Trance-like states, catalepsy, akinesia, flexibilitas cerea, and so forth, seen by the clinical neurologist in both organic and functional affections, ought to be borne in mind as symptoms allied to some of those producible in a suitable individual by the hypnotist. The examination of these along physiological lines must prove fruitful when the deductions are applied to the phenomena of hypnosis. Some attempt to proceed along these lines is manifest in this monograph, but it is in no little degree vitiated by a doctrinaire attitude of mind and by a readiness to accept as established what at the most should only be regarded as suggestive, if at the same time of heuristic value. We are told, for instance, that "there is no doubt" that "the sleeping centre" is situated "in the neighbourhood of the third ventricle." No allusion is made to the fundamental researches of Pawlow, with which such a bald statement is frankly incompatible, and reliance is placed on the cases reported by Lucksch and by Pette, which in point of fact are useless from the standpoint of localisation. We note in this connexion a regrettable absence of the critical spirit.

On the psychological side full consideration is given to the phenomenology of hypnosis, with due reference to the views of Freud and others. The therapeutics of the subject are also faithfully dealt with; the method is declared to be applicable to cases of neurosis, phobia, occupation neurosis, tic, stammering, hysteria, "disturbances of potency," and nocturnal enuresis. We are told incidentally that an impotent man is "only too much inclined" to be dissuaded from attempts at sexual activity, and that he "must then be forced" to make such attempts. If "serious reasons" are present, and if "the patient is familiar with the possible consequences," extra-conjugal sexual intercourse may be recommended by the physician. It is well, we think, that the profession should realise there are evidently quarters where advice of this kind is seriously tendered.


Successive editions of this well-known textbook mark the author's increasing conviction of the validity and importance of psychoanalytical doctrines. In
earlier editions these doctrines made their first appearance in separate chapters which were independent of the main structure of the book, but in the later editions that structure has been more and more penetrated and suffused by psychoanalytical viewpoints. A valiant attempt has been made to harmonise this new angle of approach with the clinical and pathological material which necessarily constitutes the greater part of a textbook of psychiatry. This attempt, though it cannot be said to have achieved entire success, is certainly interesting and stimulating. The author's enthusiastic acceptance of Freud's work carries with it, however, one defect of perspective which is of considerable importance in a general text-book for students. Conceptions and theories are referred to as established which certainly have not yet achieved the position which warrants such a description, and the student may well fail to appreciate that these conceptions represent only the views of a certain school, although a very important and fertile one.

The whole book has been extensively revised, and such comparatively recent topics as the malarial treatment of general paralysis and the mental sequelae of encephalitis lethargica have been adequately considered. Except for the one criticism mentioned Dr. Stoddart's work can be confidently recommended as one of the best textbooks in our language.


Two essays are contained in this little book which will repay the attention of a wide public, both medical and lay. The first, founded on the Bradshaw lecture for 1926, deals with rival theories of diagnosis. Dr. Crookshank gives a scholarly exposition of the contrasting views of Hippocrates and Galen. The latter, which sought for a classification of diseases, has dominated medicine for the last thousand years and culminated in the absurdity of an official nomenclature. The author welcomes the signs of a return to the naturalistic method of Hippocrates, which aimed at a diagnosis of the patient as a whole with special relation to his particular disability and the method of a relief from this. In conclusion he points out that "naming the disease" is a convenience so long as the disease is considered simply as a concept and not an entity in itself and so long as our object is to arrive at a therapy suited to the patient and not exclusively to the signs he exhibits.

In the second essay, which is founded on a contribution to a discussion on spiritual healing, he justly castigates the medical men (of whom there are too many) who have too literally followed John Hunter's dictum that doctors should not think. These are always seeking to distinguish between functional and organic disease and arrive at the inevitable conclusion that "organic disease is what we say we cure but don't, while functional disease is what the quacks cure and we wish to goodness we could." He rightly points out that
a rigid distinction is absurd and that "we must rid our minds of this shibboleth before we discuss such questions as spiritual healing." He is prepared to admit the possibility of this, given sufficient evidence, since he believes in the existence of a biological impulse towards healing as exemplified by the salamander growing a new leg. He thinks that at higher levels this power might be projected to others and is of the opinion that many "healers" both within and without the profession do seem to possess a "healing power" irrespective of the drugs or other form of therapy which they employ.

R. G. G.

Idiosyncrasies. By Sir Humphry Rolleston, Bt., K.C.B., F.R.C.P.

The first impression left on the mind by a perusal of Sir Humphry Rolleston's interesting little volume is to how considerable an extent medical knowledge deals with probabilities rather than certainties, and how various are the interpretations of which a given set of phenomena are capable. Defining idiosyncrasy as an abnormal reaction, a functional aberration, in an otherwise normal person, and endeavouring to separate it from allergy, anaphylaxis, diathesis, constitution, and temperament, Sir Humphry provides the reader with a series of illustrations, historical and present-day, of such abnormalities in respect of food, drugs, tobacco, and so forth; more generally, in respect of both psychological and physiological reactions. The neurologist will be interested in the remarks on migraine and epilepsy, on angioneurotic oedema and asthma; and if he is of a materialistic turn of mind will be comforted by the author's patient endeavour to seek an objective explanation for these and allied syndromes. Insistence on a psychological origin for epilepsy and migraine must fail to impress any intellectually honest observer, who if he willingly admits occasional precipitation by a psychical factor nevertheless finds in innumerable other instances that causation by biochemical and other organic agencies is incontrovertible.

Dermatological Neuroses. By W. J. O'Donovan, M.D., Assistant Physician, Skin Department, London Hospital, etc. Psyche Miniatures; Medical Series No. 5. London: Kegan Paul & Co. 1927. Pp. 99. Price 2s. 6d. net.

One need not be a professional dermatologist to appreciate the charm of this little book, which deals with the psychological factor in skin affections and incidentally probes rather deeply into what is called the "seamy side" of human nature. The skin physician has his problems no less than the neurologist and psychiatrist, problems that render his practice distinctly arduous if he fails