The Mentally Ill in America. By ALBERT DEUTSCH. Doubleday Doran.

Mr. Deutsch has the advantage of writing sympathetically about a subject designed to elicit sympathy. Nevertheless he has achieved a very useful piece of work. The book is written with a restraint peculiarly valuable and, though essentially a non-technical work, it ought to have a profound effect on physicians dealing with mental administration. I think it should be a tremendous corrective to self-satisfaction that, as Mr. Deutsch's book shows, some of the enormities meted out to mental patients occurred within living memory.

The different phases in the reform of mental treatment are skilfully outlined, and though Mr. Deutsch does not appear to be a doctor, he has certainly a useful grasp of the main modern tendencies in the medical treatment of mental cases, and a very considerable insight into the general requirements of mental patients.

The early chapters, in particular, show a pleasing erudition, and the author implies, and with by no means negligible evidence, that Anglo-Saxon civilization has not shone conspicuously in the alleviation of conditions for these sufferers.

In saying that the book would be of great value to physicians one does not wish to imply that its general appeal is limited. It is essentially readable and clearly expounded. It is fervently to be hoped that lay persons reading Mr. Deutsch's book will not be satisfied in deploring the horrible conditions prevailing in mental institutions until far too recently in social history. It is greatly to be desired that they will realize that their own keeping alive of the stigma on mental disorder is, psychologically speaking, a condoning of the brutalities of previous generations. A. GUIRDHAM.

American Medicine: Expert Testimony out of Court. Vols. I and II. The American Foundation Inc., 1937.

In reading the recommendations on medical education in the above work it becomes obvious that the infiltration of psychiatry into all branches of medicine is more recognized in the United States of America than here. Features of the discussion are firstly the catholicity of the specialities which recognize the importance of psychiatry in their own vocation, and secondly the general emphasis on the psychoneurotic nature of most symptoms. From the point of view of the psychiatrist the situation in America seems more hopeful than here. By a curious anomaly the attitude is less bureaucratic and institutionalized. They insist on the importance of the general practitioner being trained in psychiatry; they are concerned with the toning of the disease reaction by the personality of the victim. It is evident, too, that considerable attention is being paid to diathesis, that viewpoint in medicine which most emphasizes the inseparable nature of body and mind within the patient's psyche. One has always believed that the number of diseases in which psychoneurotic conditions are precipitating factors is larger than is customarily allowed. It is interesting to read that an American professor of medicine noted "what was almost an epidemic of peptic ulcers following the introduction of the point system". It is most cheering, too, to read the recommendations that "the nucleus of psychiatry should be a psychiatric department, in connection with an in-patient and out-patient clinic affiliated with a medical school. In such

a milieu the obligations for teaching, service and research can be best fulfilled ". One has always felt, in this country, that while every mental hospital's boast is that it resembles a general hospital, psychiatrists themselves tend to keep their speciality a closed circuit. This is largely because the results of therapeutics, in the more bureaucratic psychiatric spheres, compare so badly with those obtained in general hospitals. This is inevitable in the present state of our knowledge of psychiatry, which fact might at least be used to argue a greater infiltration of general medicine into psychiatry, if only as a utilization of greater resources. So many of the contributors to this discussion under consideration indicate the importance of studying further the somatic effects of psychic disturbances. This argues an abandonment of the relative isolation of psychiatry as practised in this country. There are, in England, too many specialists and clinics dealing with mental disorder solely from the viewpoint of one particular psychological technique. The attitude in America is to consider most closely the body as the mirror of the mind's ills and *vice versa*. This, too, may be one aspect only, but it is more all-embracing than any other that springs to the mind.

To correct the impression that the prospect of psychiatry in American medicine is utopian, it must be said that there are several voices who resist what they call the psychiatric approach, or some implied equivalent. The very usage of such a term embodies a misconception. A purely psychiatric approach would be a repetition of errors. What doctors aim to study is the whole man, for the present in sickness, and at some age infinitely to be deferred, in health. Psychiatry must be infiltrated into medicine until it is inseparable from it. It *is* medicine. Man consists of mind and body. The former directs the latter. The latter can accelerate or retard the former. Both are incapable of separate existence, except in the minds of those practitioners whose ideal of the ultra-practical so militates against the exercise of sense. It is argued, by some taking part in this discussion, that what are vaguely called tact and understanding are enough, that these are gifts and cannot be taught. Be this as it may, there is no reason why these gifts should not be developed. They embody, after all, an innate flair for psychology. The opponents of the dread psychiatric approach agree that these gifts are of overwhelming value. To argue that they are enough in themselves is equivalent to saying that a musical prodigy achieves equal results without an instrument.

It is a misfortune that no names are quoted. The statement of a professor of neurology in a Grade A medical school could be read with profit by all doctors, and particularly all intending and fledgling psychiatrists. He points out the enormous danger of regarding the study of the mind as a hasty speciality, a working knowledge of which can be acquired in a period somewhat equivalent to that of an ear, nose and throat house appointment. There are too many rapidly commissioned recruits reaching that front line where the feet of angels have not dared to tread. But the most striking phrase in this gentleman's contribution is—" Every important advance in psychiatry has been made by someone outside the field of psychiatry itself ". This is palpably erroneous, but too near the truth to be disregarded. Psychiatry is, in fact, reliant to a large extent on original minds in the different aspects of medicine. Long may it remain so. Where it insists on regarding itself as a cast-iron, semi-mystical speciality—and there is no doubt that a large proportion of its gimlet-eyed exponents love this aura that clings round their heads—it will deteriorate in value, and achieve its best apotheosis as a source of wit. Our

professor of neurology says also that the results obtained by the better grade of general practitioner and specialist exceed those achieved by the psychiatrist in more than half the cases. I am sure that this is largely true.

Other than in the section dealing with medical education the references to psychiatry are piecemeal. It is to be noted that the provision for the psychoneurotic poor is no better in the United States than in England.

A. GUIRDHAM.

Dorothea Dix, Forgotten Samaritan. By HELEN E. MARSHALL. University of North Carolina Press, 1937.

The biography of Miss Dix is an inspiring work. It is a homage, and tends to depreciate in value as a consequence. It is obviously a labour of love, and this necessarily involves some passing reference to the heroine's eyes. As the book is not intended for strictly scientific consumption, being a work of human and humane interest, such criticis mneed not deter the reader ; it is a biography, and reads like a novel, but is none the worse for that. There was a time when philosophers could express abstract thoughts in clear prose. If that day is over, at least the simple intentions of Miss Marshall and her heroine are easy to follow, which is a relief from so much psychological writing that makes a virtue of obscurity.

The book's value is twofold. In the first place it acts as an admirable corrective to the ultra-scientific attitude which forgets that the mental patient being a gregarious failure, social factors must be considered in his treatment. It may not seem of great importance, in these days of shock therapy, to consider the application in mental institutions of ordinary decency as of equivalent value to the new techniques. This is a short-sighted view. It neglects the fact that in mental hospitals the amelioration of the incurable is of at least as great importance as an ethical obligation as the obtaining of dramatic recoveries. Obviously there is still scope for an increase in humanity. A vast amount of work is being done on mental disorder. Far too little is devoted to the social factor. The intelligent application of humane principles is not counted as research. It is felt that this is best delegated to those without qualities for purely scientific investigation. It would be senseless to belittle the latter. I cannot see that it is not of at least equal importance to consider what pertains to the happiness of all patients, curable or otherwise. It is an obligation of civilization, a corner-stone of all medical treatment, and a common denominator in the work of all doctors who obtain results. Miss Dorothea Dix is therefore entitled to honourable classification along with those of more original, but no more devoted, minds.

The second factor of value in this book is its demonstration that character itself is a form of genius. In many who have benefited mankind, purely intellectual gifts have been inconspicuous. The refusal to deviate from a chosen and laudable path has too often been a blessing to mankind to be a subject of derision. It is a sad truth that mankind's leaders too often achieve their role of mentor in virtue of their incompleteness. Miss Dix is no exception to this general rule. It is a little depressing to read in one section of the book that she declined a journey to one of the most beautiful Continental regions. It seemed unimportant beside her mission. Her conception of beauty was too exclusively ethical. It must be admitted, however, that she wrote, a little too lyrically, of the beauties of the Alps.