

Nerves and Their Cure. By C. EDWARD BARKER. London: George Allen & Unwin. Pp. 194.

One of the greatest assets of this little book is that it is written in language which everyone can understand. Freud's Id, Ego and Super-Ego are translated to the Hungry Self, the Central Self and the Condemning Self.

The first half of the book deals with the causes of neurosis—in the author's opinion emotional disturbances in early childhood—and their various manifestations. He describes the "personal pattern" set up in each individual whereby denied natural satisfaction he will seek a substitute satisfaction which repeated through the years stunts growth and leads to neurosis. With tributes to Dr. Freud, Mrs. Melanie Klein and Dr. Ronald Fairbairn, he carries his argument through the various stages of growth with many examples, including his own experiences of relief from severe neurotic illness through analysis. He makes very clear the point that neurosis has a goal as well as a cause. "We are a breast-starved race", says Mr. Barker.

In Part II the author deals with the cure—and here he is wholly on the side of the analysts and analytical psychotherapists.

As for financial reasons there are many who cannot take advantage of this road to recovery he describes a system of "self-help". He advises the sufferer to give himself a period each day for free-association and lists the steps to be taken as:

- (1) Understanding (of the personal pattern).
- (2) Insight (with the help of dreams and day-dreams).
- (3) Re-education.
- (4) Auto-suggestion.
- (5) True religious faith.

It is difficult to write a book which simplifies without by implication making the subject simple, but this, I think, the author largely succeeds in doing. Certainly the neurotic embarking on his self-cure will realize that it is not simple. With some expert guidance one can imagine the book having value—without it would seem a herculean task.

The author introduces his chapter on religious faith with a good deal of diffidence, but it is well worth reading.

The book throughout is written with enthusiasm and gusto, and this will tend to irritate some readers. Also, there are many points with which psychiatrists of various schools of thought would disagree: this would appear to be inevitable in a popular exposition. There would also appear to be some exaggerations of fact, e.g., page 56, "Many mothers, enjoying the rhythm of breast feeding, sometimes experience sexual orgasm during the feeding process. That is all to the good."

However, having said this, I must point out that the whole of the underlying aspect of the book is dynamic and any person who reads the book will have his fundamental understanding of the deeper aspects of human nature enhanced.

S. T. HAYWARD.

Chemical Concepts of Psychosis. Edited by N. RINKEL and H. C. B. DENVER. London: Peter Owen, 1960.

This is a most comprehensive book on the use of biochemical and pharmacological methods for the study of the origins of psychoses in relationship to their treatment. The book contains fifty-three contributions, which were originally presented at the Second International Congress of Psychiatry at Zurich, by scientists of the basic sciences and clinical scientists in all branches and aspects of psychiatry, from all over the world. Interesting discussions are presented on lysergic acid, mescaline and adrenaline derivatives. A survey of the pharmacology of serotonin is presented and its possible role in mental illness discussed. A description of the action of psychotropic drugs in relationship to the ergotropic and trophic systems described by Hess is interestingly portrayed. The roles of indoles and studies involving the effects of body fluids from psychotic patients are fully described. Finally, the problem of schizophrenia is discussed from many aspects and general theories and reflections are presented by various

authors on chemical theories of mental illness. This is an excellent book containing valuable information for the clinician and research worker.

W. LINFORD REES.

Mental Illness in London. By VERA NORRIS. Maudsley Monograph No. 6. London: Chapman & Hall, 1959. Pp. 317.

This outstanding book by the late Dr. Norris is a survey of patients admitted to two observation units and to certain mental hospitals in the London area during the years 1947–1949. Patients were followed up until December, 1951. The investigation is both comprehensive and extensive, involving in all the examination of 7,000 case records and the analysis for each patient of thirty different items. The results show that, notwithstanding advances in treatment, the resident population in mental hospitals during the period under review was still increasing, and 85 per cent. of the patients on any given day will have been there for more than one year. In general it was found that the prognosis of almost all mental illnesses severe enough to require mental hospital treatment was bad. This is borne out by the duration of stay in hospital and also by the unusually high mortality risk.

This book is a model of statistical and scientific enquiry into a difficult problem and can be strongly recommended.

W. LINFORD REES.

Family and Class Dynamics. By JEROME K. MYERS and BERTRAM ROBERTS. London: Chapman & Hall, 1959. Pp. 295, 565.

This book is the second report in the New Haven study of social class and mental illness and is a companion volume to Hollingshead and Redlich's *Social Class and Mental Illness*. Based on ten years' research it reports investigations into the significance of social class differences on the development, manifestation and course of (1) schizophrenia in 25 subjects and (2) neurosis in 25 patients. The age range in both groups was from 22–44 years, and members of the families were studied by a team consisting of psychiatrists, sociologists and other social scientists.

Significant differences were found between Hollingshead's Social Class III patients (small business and clerical class) and Social Class V patients (lowest unskilled labouring class). The differences found related to parent-child relationships, psychosexual development, community pressures, attitudes to psychiatric illness and symptomatology.

The authors consider that social class factors, although not the main cause of illness, may precipitate serious psychiatric illnesses in vulnerable persons.

In a study of this kind the possibility of the results being influenced by bias, by the methods used in collection of data and their subsequent analysis is difficult to rule out.

This is an important book meriting serious study by everyone interested in the social aspects of psychiatry.

W. LINFORD REES.

Area of Residence of Mental Hospital Patients: Studies on Medical and Population Subjects, No. 16. London: H.M.S.O., 1960. Pp. 177.

This report, published in December, 1960, lists the numbers of admissions to designated mental hospitals in England and Wales during 1957 by the area of residence of the patients. "Area of residence" is the Local Authority area of the patient's address at the time of his admission. First admissions are distinguished from those other than first, and the figures are given by sex, 5-year age-groups, and seven diagnoses. It was felt that such figures would be of value to research workers studying local variations in the frequency of different diagnoses of mental illness.

The bare numbers of admissions mean little, but with the aid of the Registrar General's *Annual Estimates of the Population of England and Wales and of Local Authority Areas, 1957* (London, H.M.S.O., 1958, price 1s.), rates of admission can be calculated. Such rates show differences which at first sight seem surprising. Why