

This little pamphlet only sketches the process and does not mention the impressive evaluative research which is nearing completion. Denis Carroll would have strongly approved his first memorial lecture.

P. D. SCOTT.

Institutional Neurosis. By RUSSELL BARTON. 2nd ed. Bristol: John Wright & Sons, Ltd. 1966. Pp. 68. Price 9s. 6d.

In its second edition this book describes the concept or construct of institutional neurosis. The list of references is sizeable, but there is little detailed work showing how the construct is derived from the various works referred to. The effect of this is to produce a sort of "identikit" picture of a bad mental hospital, derived from the bad features of many. The proposals for cure therefore have a certain air of being prescribed for an Aunt Sally. This is a pity, as many of the proposals are excellent, and there can be few hospitals which could not get ideas for useful improvements from this book. Some readers may not take kindly to the presentation of these ideas in a form reminiscent of the *Manual of Infantry Training*. This may be useful in tackling the emergency presented by a really bad hospital, but at a later stage has the disadvantage that the staff are habituated to doing the right thing by numbers rather than by thinking things out together. It is perhaps because of this manner of presentation that the section on changing staff attitudes is not very satisfactory. There is implicit condemnation of the tendency of the staff to seek status and prestige, but little discussion of the reasons why they seek it and how this situation can be resolved.

In short, this book contains much excellent material, set out in a form useful to those who need to make a quick impact on a bad hospital. It does not, however, offer much to those who may wish to enquire more deeply and apply more radical methods. Incidentally, an edition published in 1966 should not contain a reference (p. 56) to visits by members of the Board of Control.

A. B. MONRO.

Mental Illness and Social Work. By EUGENE HEIMLER. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd. 1967. Pp. 160. Price 4s. 6d.

This book is intended to introduce the intelligent layman to the present state of the psychiatric services. Of these, the author gives a clear and lively account, quoting some of the main articles which have appeared on the subject and discussing their short-

comings and the various problems which have to be faced. The author is an experienced psychiatric social worker, and the emphasis throughout the book is on the value of social case work. This is illustrated by examples of his various therapeutic successes.

The importance of helping people to cope with their present problems is stressed, although this is not the "new approach" which the author appears to claim. There is an interesting account of his attempts to change the attitudes not only of men on "national assistance" but of those officials who were trying to deal with them.

Finally, he describes his social functioning scale, which appears to equate "satisfaction" with health and "dissatisfaction" with ill health. Such an approach may be more to the liking of an enthusiastic social case-worker than of the average psychiatrist in the over-booked clinic which the author rightly deplores. This book will raise the expectations of the dissatisfied layman, but it will leave the intelligent layman dissatisfied.

J. L. T. BIRLEY.

Mental Health and Mental Illness. By NESTA ROBERTS. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1967. Pp. 80. Price 15s.

This little book is written for the Library of Social Policy and Administration to provide an introductory text for those undertaking social studies. It is also aimed at social workers generally and all that wider group of people loosely concerned with mental health. It is remarkable in a book about psychiatry, to find so much information crammed into a mere 70 pages. An even greater achievement is that the book remains very easy reading. I doubt whether such an essay could have been written by a practising clinician or social worker, but Miss Roberts is an accomplished journalist, well used to condensing information and yet not losing her readers.

Mental hospitals in England are surveyed over the last 200 years and also the move out from the mental Health to the General Hospital. Changes brought about by the N.H.S. and the specialized Act are dealt with, and the unrealistic expectations of the 1962 Hospital Plan are put into perspective. The chapter on Mental Hospitals Today is particularly successful in conveying something of the change and excitement that has blown through so many psychiatric hospitals in the last 15 years. The last two chapters on international aspects and potential future progress usefully round off the book. The bibliography is exceptionally well chosen.

This would also be a useful book for medical students and senior house officers in psychiatric units