

The chapter by White on abnormalities of behaviour will appeal to our readers most strongly, though there is not a lot in it that the conscientious reader of the literature is unaware of, but it is nevertheless a good summary of the position as it existed in the beginning of 1952, and the writer utters a timely word of caution to those who are inclined blindly to accept biochemical theories as an explanation of every departure from normal behaviour.

G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

Clinical Psychiatry. By IAN SKOTTOWE. "The Practitioner" Series. London: Eyre & Spottiswode Ltd., 1953. Pp. 395. Price 36s.

This is a good book for the practitioner and for the student. It is a well-written and interesting presentation of clinical psychiatry from the psychobiological or Meyerian viewpoint. The biological outlook on psychiatry owes a great deal to Adolf Meyer.

It is full of the common sense which one has learnt to expect from the writer. It is a relief to see in print the statement that it is unwise for a doctor to say that a patient needs a certain form of treatment. If doctors would leave the form and duration of treatment to the mental hospital psychiatrist a great deal of trouble would be avoided; so often one hears the story that the patient has been told that three weeks in hospital and a few shocks and they will be fully recovered.

How true is the author's remark that occupational therapy should always be judged by its effect on the patient and not by the excellence of the articles that he makes or the work that he does. When general under-development of the cardio-vascular system is mentioned as a finding in schizophrenia it would have been wise to mention the "small heart" which is so frequently found post-mortem. We wonder if all the psychosomatic experts would agree with the statement that there is no such thing as "hysterical or at least psychogenic pyrexia." It is pleasing to the reviewer to see pointed out that the word *amentia* is better avoided, as it refers to confusional insanity on the continent of Europe, and to see the word *oligophrenia* freely used.

Altogether a most satisfying and agreeable book and a worthy product of British psychiatry.

G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

Physiology of Vision. British Medical Bulletin, vol. 9, No. 1. The British Council, 1953. Pp. 83. Price 15s.

Thirteen authors, each an authority in his field, give reviews of various aspects of the subject. Articles, printing and illustrations are all excellent, and I need say no more than that it sustains the high standard set by the series' previous numbers.

W. ROSS ASHBY.