

One third of the book is devoted to miners' nystagmus because "this condition differs little from the common psychoneuroses." "Miners' nystagmus appears to have no morbid anatomy or morbid histology, and this fact, taken with its baffling lack of explanation, raises the question of an explanation on psychiatric grounds." Similarly one quarter of the book is devoted to the psychoneurotic nature of the effort syndrome.

One wonders whether the title of the book should not have been, "Some Common *Pseudosomatic Manifestations*."

The book includes much statistical matter, but reads easily.

C. E. H. TURNER.

My Son's Story. By JOHN P. FRANK. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1952. Pp. 174. Price 10s. 6d.

Psychiatrists and the parents of mentally defective offspring are fortunate that this little book has been written. It is opportune that it should be published at a time when the National Health Service is striving to improve the institutional accommodation for mental defectives.

Mr. Frank, a teacher of law at an American university, writes of the reactions of his wife and himself to discovering that their first child was backward. His wife has written two of the chapters—"if our experience can help anyone else, then I suppose it is worth while opening our personal lives like this."

It was difficult to accept that the baby was defective, "somehow we still had the conviction that no ultimate disaster *could* befall us."

But with sense and sensibility the parents reoriented themselves—"we have learned to hope for less and less, and always to hope with the original intensity of the first hope."

Institutionalization was decided upon in spite of many initial misgivings of what might result—"he may have no affection, no opportunity to grow within the limits of his stunted capacity." The authors were able to place him in an institution, whose atmosphere quite allayed their fears.

The parents decided that they would "live with candour about their child, not to hide the fact that he existed or was defective, for that, they say, would be to develop a sense of shame and guilt.

The mother admits, none the less, that "the feelings of guilt attendant upon committing a child to the permanent care of others are more overwhelming and devastating than could possibly be described or even hinted to those who have never experienced them." The father agrees—"we were each extremely unhappy"—and this in spite of a settled conviction they were doing the right thing.

Finally they achieved peace of mind—"This doesn't mean forgetfulness, which we neither have nor want. It means lack of minute to minute concern."

The book has an introduction by Dr. Noel Burke of Cell Barnes Hospital, St. Albans.

C. E. H. TURNER.

Bedlam on the Jacobean Stage. By ROBERT RENTOUL REED, jun. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1952. Pp. 160. Price \$3.50.

The author briefly considers Bethlem Hospital and its background from its foundation as a priory in 1247 and acknowledges his indebtedness to the writings of Dr. Hack Tuke and the Rev. E. G. O'Donoghue. Insanity as a theatrical device is then discussed and the fact stressed that the mental pathology of the Elizabethan Age became essentially functional to the plot of the drama as a medium of spectacle, and as a symbolic expression of human disillusionment. The major difference between Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatic studies of madness is said to rest in the fact that in the latter not only shock but humoral theories are essential factors in the study. The book will interest the historically-minded psychiatrist.

NORWOOD EAST.