

Mental Hospital Manual. By JOHN MACARTHUR, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.
London: Henry Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton, 1921. Demy
8vo. Pp. x + 215. Price 15s.

An author who succeeds in carrying out, in his book, his intentions as stated in his preface is surely to be congratulated, especially so when the subject dealt with is as many sided as the one essayed in the work before us. Dr. Macarthur has ably filled a gap, which for some time has been beginning to be felt in psychiatric literature, for although there are available several good text-books relating to mental diseases, no practical manual has appeared in recent years which deals at once with the administrative, clinical, and legal sides of psychological medicine. The more the life in our large public mental hospitals is written up, and the truth about such institutions laid bare, whether as regards doctors, nurses, or patients, the better chances there are of dispelling the ignorance and prejudices of people generally regarding the treatment of the insane. Such books act as an antidote to the trash so freely distributed by the press and by irresponsible writers to a credulous public, credulous because of the mystery which still surrounds our great mental institutions, and, in addition, always ready to believe the worst about a side of our social life it would sooner forget. Dr. Macarthur's *Mental Hospital Manual* appears at a most opportune moment, when the public mind has been strangely (to us) upset by the least authoritative of any publication dealing with the lunacy problem which has appeared for many years. Our author is modest and plainly honest, and, backed by fourteen years' mental hospital experience, obviously knows what he is writing about. He demonstrates rather than teaches. He does not dogmatise as to what he thinks should happen, but rather narrates what actually does happen, and why.

The book is primarily intended for the guidance and instruction of medical officers on joining for the first time the service of a mental hospital, and contains the practical knowledge of psychiatry gathered by every medical officer of average ability and experience. It will also be useful to those practitioners who have not had the advantage of a psychiatric training. Incidentally it will prove a boon to the senior medical officers whose lot it is, as a rule, to break in to the work a newly-joined colleague, especially as regards the smaller details. The mental hospital is first described—its purposes, the wards, and administrative buildings. Following this is an excellent *résumé* of the duties of assistant medical officers with regard to patients and staff. Subsequent chapters deal with the treatment of the insane, emergencies, treatment of special mental states, the admission and discharge of patients, how to deal with patients of defective habits, contagious diseases, etc. Concluding chapters relate to the legal aspect of the subject—legal control, lunacy law, reception orders, classes of patients, statutory books, notices, etc.

The subject matter, though in condensed form, is very readable. Lucidity, soundness, and practical utility characterise the work throughout, and our strong advice to all junior medical officers is to buy it, study it, and be guided by it.

The only criticism we would make is that Dr. Macarthur has, we should imagine, limited himself a good deal to practices which obtain in

the institution—famous, as it is—in which he serves, and also, not by any means universally so, but in a not inconsiderable degree, in all the London County Mental Hospitals, and has not roamed farther afield.

Though the sections of his book dealing with the actual care and treatment of patients are applicable generally and will find ready acceptance, yet the administration of mental hospitals, though fundamentally the same, varies in details in different counties, and a broader outlook and some mention of alternative methods, and especially an additional chapter dealing with private institutions and voluntary patients, would enhance the value of a subsequent edition, and enlarge the area of its usefulness.

We trust, however, that Dr. Macarthur's work will appeal to the reading public generally, and we especially commend it to those who are genuinely anxious as to what is happening in our large mental hospitals. It will also be informative to those who, knowing no better, both publicly and privately condemn the mental hospital medical service as lacking in medical interest and vitality, and leading to mental and moral decay—a dead end to be avoided at all costs.

It reveals the immense trouble taken to secure what the public are most anxious about, and that is, the kindly treatment of the patients. Given a trusting and unprejudiced public opinion, one can gather from its pages how much the burden of administration could be lightened and the time thus wasted devoted to medical treatment; and, allowed more expenditure, how readily all the strictures, so freely bestowed upon us, could be met and the hospitalisation of asylums completed.

JOHN R. LORD.

Lectures on Mental Defect and Criminal Conduct. Delivered to the Members of the Class of Psychological Medicine, Maudsley Hospital. By Sir BRYAN DONKIN, M.D., F.R.C.P., late one of H.M. Commissioners of Prisons. (Reprints from *Lancet*, 1921.)

In these lectures on mental deficiency in relation to crime which he delivered at the Maudsley Hospital in the session of 1920, and which he has now published in pamphlet form, Sir Bryan Donkin has supplied a much-needed corrective to the flatulent speculation which bulks so largely in the literature of criminology. It has been the misfortune of that embryo science that its biological and its sociological aspects have usually been studied in entire isolation from one another, with the result that there has been no adequate recognition of that mutual interaction of individual and environmental factors which determines the form and direction of conduct in criminals as in all men. The exclusive attention to one or other of these two sets of factors has necessarily led to exaggerated and one-sided views, which, being in obvious conflict with facts of every-day experience, have tended to discredit the application of scientific methods to the study of the criminal. This has been most conspicuously the case in regard to those theories which purport to explain criminal conduct by referring it directly to assumed biological conditions—a method of easy generalisation which still finds numerous votaries. For the practitioners of this method it is sufficient to postulate, in regard to crime, as in regard to any other form of anti-social