

and varied physical causes were related to identical psychotic disorders. In this way Karl Bonhoeffer was led to formulate the 'acute exogenous mental reaction type', with which his name will remain associated in medical history. FELIX POST.

N.A.M.H. and W.F.M.H.

Progress in Mental Health. Edited by HUGH FREEMAN. J. A. Churchill Ltd. 1969. Pp. 346. Price 60s.

This volume contains a selection of papers from the Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress on Mental Health, organized in London in August 1968 by the National Association for Mental Health on behalf of the World Federation for Mental Health. The Congress was attended by nearly two thousand lay and professional delegates from all over the world and from many different backgrounds. The authors of these papers, for instance, include psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, anthropologists and sociologists.

Forty-nine papers are presented here under the seven headings of Conflict, Social and Cultural Aspects, Public Attitudes and Education, Children and Young People, Professional Education, Clinical Aspects and Services, and Theoretical Aspects.

To appreciate the reason for the nature and variety of these papers it is necessary to be familiar with the aims and interests of the World Federation for Mental Health. In the words of its President, Professor Maurice Carstairs, it is 'a league of voluntary bodies concerned with one (though crucially important) aspect of health, but also with the much wider theme of fullest development and realization of human potentialities. Being non-governmental we are free to act as a pressure group in aid of the causes we support. We are able to do this in spite of our extremely modest financial resources because we are able to enlist the help of influential citizens, leaders in the mental health professions and in other walks of life, in all our member countries.'

It would be unfair to apply to the contents of this volume the standards of criticism usually applied to papers in scientific journals, since most of them are sketches of current views on a topic, or brief summaries of recent research. They are clearly designed to acquaint the reader with a few major points and conclusions rather than to present information in detail. A few papers, particularly those by non-clinical delegates, in the sections on 'Conflict' and 'Theoretical Aspects' are of more usual length, and make interesting reading for anyone interested in the theoretical fringes of psychiatry.

This book can be recommended as providing a

good picture of the scope of the National Association of Mental Health and the World Federation for Mental Health, and almost everyone is bound to find something of interest within its compass.

J. E. COOPER.

HANOVER'S COMPLAINT

George III and the Mad-Business. By IDA MACALPINE and RICHARD HUNTER. Allen Lane. The Penguin Press. 1969. Pp. 407. Price 70s.

This book is an expansion and elaboration of earlier articles on the illness of George III. The authors' thesis is now well-known. It is that the king suffered from the variegated form of porphyria (the earlier diagnosis of acute intermittent porphyria has been altered) and that he inherited the dominant gene responsible for this condition along the direct line of succession from Mary Queen of Scots. When the articles were first published in the *British Medical Journal*, there followed a long and sometimes acrimonious correspondence in which experts took sides for and against the theory. Dissenting views were notably expressed by Professor Dent and by Dr. Geoffrey Dean—probably one of the world's leading authorities on the subject. The latter is on record as being prepared to eat his hat if the authors' case were substantiated. Important objections were raised on clinical, genetic and biochemical grounds, but the reader of the book is given no inkling of this and might well be misled into too easy acceptance of the diagnosis. The comments quoted on the dust jacket are characteristic. 'Any lingering doubt that George III was not mad' (*sic*) proclaims *The Times*, 'but suffered from . . . porphyria . . . would appear to have been finally laid to rest.'

The authors now claim that four living descendants of George III have been diagnosed as suffering from variegated porphyria, but they do not give any clinical or biochemical information to support this. While it is understandable that they should be discreet about revealing any details that might lead the sufferers to be identified, is it too much to ask for the biochemical composition of their noble excrement, since we are told that it was examined 'by modern methods'? Nor can the authors claim to have presented these data elsewhere; in a previous paper the cases of two descendants of George II were reported, but these were quite inadequately documented; in one we were asked to accept the diagnosis of a 'distinguished physician' while in the other the biochemical results given indicate mild deviations from the normal often found in healthy subjects. Curiously enough, these cases are not included in the present book.