

The Post-Natal Development of the Human Cerebral Cortex. By J. LE ROY CONEL. Cambridge, Mass., 1939. Pp. 114. 98 plates. Price 35s.

This book contains an account of work carried out in the Department of Anatomy of the Boston University School of Medicine and the Department of Pathology of the Harvard Medical School.

The volume is confined to a statement of the state of development of the neurones in the cerebral cortex of the full-time foetus immediately after birth.

Six brains from normal infants were used, four male and two female. No sex difference was noted. In the frontal lobe no Nissl bodies were present in any of the cells, the cytoplasm being merely a homogeneous mass. Neurofibrils can be seen in only some of the largest giant pyramidal cells. It is doubtful whether there is any function in the frontal cortex of the newborn. Myelin is present only in the anterior central gyrus, and here is almost entirely limited to the nerve-fibres in the white matter. It appears to be present in greatest quantity in the region of the upper trunk and shoulder and least in the region of the head. No myelin is present in any part of the parietal lobe posterior to the gyrus centralis posterior. The quantity of stained fibres and the density of the stain are much less in the occipital lobe than in the gyrus centralis posterior.

In the temporal lobe myelin is present only in the cores of the two transverse temporal gyri and of the temporal lobe. No myelin fibres are present anywhere in the cortex or core of the insular gyri, and few in the rhinencephalon.

The occipital lobe presents the same architectonic picture as the adult cortex.

The book is very well produced, and the ninety-eight plates are beautiful reproductions with camera lucida drawings of the cells, etc., in the various layers.

A very fine book.

G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry. Vol. Edited by F. L. GOLLA, F.R.C.P. London County Council, 1939. Price 15s.

This volume contains the papers published during 1938 from the Central Pathological Laboratory of the London County Hospitals for Nervous and Mental Disorders. There are in all fifty-eight papers, and of these twenty-nine, or one-half, were published in the *Journal of Mental Science*. It includes Prof. Golla's Maudsley Lecture, and is unfortunately the last volume that will be edited by him.

G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

The Startle Pattern. By C. LANDIS, Ph.D., and W. A. HUNT, Ph.D. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939. Pp. xiii + 168. Price \$2.50.

The work reported on was carried out largely in the psychology laboratories of the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

The startle pattern is briefly the response to a sudden intense stimulus. During the first half second after the stimulus there occurs a very complicated patterned response which is of a reflex nature and can be demonstrated by superspeed motion picture photography. The startle pattern has two elements, the eye blink and the facial-bodily response, and obeys all the conventional laws governing simple reflexes. It is separate and distinct from the Moro

reflex, which is slow, and disappears with development and growth. The Moro is an extension reflex, the startle a flexion one.

There is an exaggeration of the startle pattern in catatonia, whilst it is absent in epilepsy. This is surprising.

The startle pattern serves as an important diagnostic sign between epilepsy and hysterical seizures.

There would appear to be considerable room for experimental work on the startle pattern in relation to psychiatry. G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

Traumatic Mental Disorders in Courts of Law. By W. A. BREND, M.A., M.D., B.Sc., Barrister-at-Law. W. Heinemann (Medical Books), Ltd. Pp. 104. Price 7s. 6d.

The author reviews the effects of the 1914-18 war in producing neuroses and psychoses, pointing out that it had little effect on the incidence of the latter.

He emphasizes that there is no relation between the degree of neurosis and the severity of the shock or injury which initiated the symptoms, and he deplors that doctors will ascribe anxiety and other neuroses solely to a physical injury.

He discusses the effect of fright before receiving the injury and the influence of suggestion in producing neurotic symptoms, and shows these are sometimes amplified by faulty medical handling.

He points out that anxiety symptoms which develop while awaiting compensation need to be differentiated from similar preceding symptoms, and he attacks the generalization that symptoms necessarily abate on the settlement of compensation. The effect of brooding on the accident is discussed with illustrative cases. The obvious facts that compensation for hysteria is never claimed as such is stated, and it is this fact that leads to so much confused and faulty nomenclature.

There is a disappointingly brief reference to the post-concussional syndrome. The book in general is a plea for the proper understanding for the basis of this type of neuroses, and many practical legal and other aspects of the Workmen's Compensation Act and the work of the medical referee are discussed. The author would like the powers of the medical referee increased, and he criticizes the Home Office Committee report, and makes counter-proposals as regards Appeal Tribunal. The book is essentially practical, and is not addressed only to the medical profession. A. A. W. PETRIE.