

why then is 'brain damage' acceptable? This report of some of the data from the Isle of Wight survey makes a beginning at rescuing us from the realms of mariner's yarns and superstitions.

A concise review of the usefulness and reliability of the literature is followed by an invaluable appraisal of the neurological examination of children. The authors have paid particular attention to the shortened version of the Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency, which they demonstrate to be a useful screening procedure for indicating with a high retest reliability the presence of neurological dysfunction. The third part of the book considers the interrelationships of 'psychiatric disorder' with 'neuro-epileptic disorder'. This unhappy lumping together of all types of neurological disorder and all types of neurotic, psychotic and behaviour disorder appears to have been forced upon the authors because of the small number of cases that emerged in the study. Of a total of 99 cases of 'brain disorder' 34 showed 'psychiatric disorder'. It is quite clear that non-specific psychiatric disorder was much more frequent among children with neuro-epileptic conditions than among children in the general population or children with chronic physical disorders not involving the brain. It is a surprising finding that, with the exception of the hyperkinetic syndrome (5 cases) and psychosis (1 case), there were no specific features peculiar to the psychiatric disorders of these children. It would appear that cerebral dysfunction renders the child vulnerable, but that the nature of his maladaptation is determined by such other factors as child rearing experience and parental attitudes. Whilst to clinicians it often seems that phenobarbitone is an important cause of behaviour difficulties in epileptic children, in this survey there was no significant relation between the presence of behaviour disorder and the medication. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children did not discriminate reliably between children with cerebral lesions and others, though there is modest support for the view that discrepancies between the performance scores and verbal scores on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale are associated with brain disorder. Low intelligence and reading retardation were highly correlated with cerebral palsy and other brain disorders. The lower the intelligence, the more likely were psychiatric disorders.

The authors conclude that global measures of brain damage should be abandoned in favour of more detailed study and delineation of more specific forms of brain dysfunction. One might add that a global concept of psychiatric disorder should also be discarded in favour of a more specific delineation of behaviour and dysfunction. The failure to do this in

the present study might be regarded as its major weakness. Psychiatric problems in childhood are a result of the complex interrelationships between cerebral development and dysfunction and family and social experience. The exploration of these hitherto little charted waters should be read not only by child psychiatrists, but by psychologists, paediatricians and neurologists, though the last two groups may find it an uncomfortable but salutary experience, for no mariner likes to find the Admiralty charts untrustworthy.

CHRISTOPHER J. WARDLE.

Autistic Children. By R. SHABERMAN. Stuart and Watkins. 1971. Pp. 94. Price £1.50.

The author has something of a Jungian approach in that he attributes the folk myth to the individual. He is nothing if not eclectic, and he seeks to explain infantile autism in terms of Buddhism, Christian teaching, and beyond that on the basis of the Greek classification of the humours and the elements. Lucifer is not forgotten. The author believes that much neurosis could be alleviated if we recognized our reincarnatory and Karmic links. One of the autistic children described was noted at an early age to have an abnormal interest in red objects. This was regarded as an indication of a fire/water imbalance, a diagnosis subsequently supported by his development of a very high temperature. Those interested in pica may be interested to know that this can be attributed to an earth deficiency.

Approaching the problem as he does, it is natural for the author to support the notion of infantile autism as something *sui generis* and to oppose any suggestion that the group is aetiologically heterogeneous or that some of the cases may have structural brain lesions as evidenced by epilepsy or by abnormal electroencephalograms. Mr. Shaberman obviously has an intimate acquaintance with and deep sympathy for autistic children, as shown by his excellent description of the problem in his first two chapters. The fact that his philosophy is unacceptable to those who seek objective criteria does not necessarily imply any criticism of his handling of the problem. His approach is essentially humanitarian, but it could add to the confusion of parents if they accept his teaching as gospel.

B. H. KIRMAN.

Discipline and Morale in School and College: A Study of Group Feeling. By M. F. CLEUGH. Tavistock Publications. 1971. Pp. 173. Price £1.75.

Recent emphasis on education, a cynic has

observed, has resulted merely in the writings on lavatory walls, a being at a lower level. Even so, education is something that interests everyone, and an author who introduces her book by asking how group spirit, morale, discipline, discrimination, stigma, and leadership are connected attracts attention. The book proves easy to read, and the experience and wisdom of the author shine out as benevolently as any village schoolmaam's spectacles. Unfortunately these studies of discipline and morale are almost exclusively anecdotal. No matter how apt or sensible the findings, they are assertions rather than conclusions. One awards an A for good intentions; but this study is too superficial to satisfy students seriously concerned with the structure, function, and learning processes in groups.

J. K. W. MORRICE.

SUBNORMALITY

Modern Trends in Mental Health and Subnormality. Edited by G. O'GORMAN. Butterworths. Pp. 302. Price £3.75.

That most of this book is devoted to problems of subnormality is striking and it is most heartening to find problems of the mentally handicapped dealt with in the framework of psychiatry. The credit of this goes to the editor, Dr. O'Gorman, whose personal interests make him a particularly suitable person to bridge the problems of general psychiatry and the specific problems of mental handicap.

Professor Trethowan sets the scene of the new trends by discussing the meaning and the frontiers of mental health, and proceeds from there to discuss the problems of prevention of mental ill health. His introduction is followed by chapters in which the contributors deal with matters of topical interest in a personal manner. This approach which would have unbalanced a textbook is of particular value in a review of modern trends. Dr. Williams, for example deals with the problems of the blind child who is at risk of becoming retarded intellectually whatever his genetic make-up. At the other end of the field, Dr. Worters examines very fully the thorny problems of terminology and definitions, and proceeds from there to survey prevalence studies. Dr. O'Gorman, in the first of a series of chapters devoted to organization and care, deals with the contentious problems of the role of the hospital in providing care for the mentally handicapped. In the more clinical parts of the book, aspects of organic aetiology are dealt with in a meticulously accurate and detailed chapter on biochemical factors in subnormality by Burns and Simon, and Dr.

Richards, writing on genetics and cytogenetics, gives a complete review with full bibliography of the present state of knowledge in this area. This book is a very useful addition to the 'Modern Trends' series, and I can see it being high up on the recommended list of reading for our new Membership examination.

A. SHAPIRO.

Buildings for Mentally Handicapped People.

A report published by the Department of Health and Social Security. 1971. H.M.S.O. Pp. 99. Price £2.00.

A team of architectural and building consultants with Department of Health officials, was commissioned to examine buildings for the relief of overcrowding in existing mental subnormality hospitals. They assessed the performance of new and upgraded buildings over the last ten years having visited a selection of hospitals and local authority units and made recommendations. Most of the report consists of useful Appendices on environmental and building standards, and costs. Dilemmas facing the policy makers, such as the interdependence of staffing levels and overcrowding, and potential conflicts between short and long-term needs, are emphasized. The team saw that an improved environment may be a precondition for attracting and retaining the staff necessary to reduce overcrowding, and that a consequent improvement in staff morale may then contribute to improved patient behaviour. They dispel some common illusions, including those that new buildings are necessarily better than old, and that converted houses are necessarily less expensive than hospitals.

The report concludes that subnormals have the same rights as other human beings to space, clean air, adequate sanitation, privacy, and other environment assumptions the rest of us take for granted. That expert, yet sensitive visitors to the subnormality services should be exposed to such blinding revelations of the commonplace, must be salutary.

J. A. BALDWIN.

THE FAMILY: ALIVE OR DEAD?

The Family and its Future. A Ciba Foundation Symposium. Edited by KATHERINE ELLIOTT. J. & A. Churchill. 104 Gloucester Place, London. Pp. 230. Price £3.00.

This is a report of a meeting between eminent representatives of sociology, social psychology, psychiatry, social anthropology and other disciplines to consider the influences likely to act on family structure in the near future. It sounds an unpromising