

wakefulness of necessity is a subcortical, probably hypothalamic function, whereas supplementary wakefulness of choice, as well as the diurnal sleep-wakefulness cycle, is a cortical function. The subcortical centre is regarded as really a wakefulness centre whose continuous activity is necessary to maintain a state of wakefulness. This centre is localized in the hypothalamus, extending perhaps into the mesencephalon and thalamus. Fatigue of the centre is not necessary for sleep; all that is necessary is for the afferent excitatory impulses from the periphery to cease. There are 1,434 references.

G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

**The Language of Gesture.** By MACDONALD CRITCHLEY, M.D., F.R.C.P. London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1939. Pp. 128. Price 5s.

A very interesting little book, which was written largely as a result of observing an aphasia which developed in a deaf-mute. The author found as time went on that there was a similarity between the system of gestures used by the deaf-mute and the sign talk of some aboriginal communities. Gestures are divided into two main divisions—those of obvious interpretation, and those which have a specific or artificial meaning. The instinctive gestures are more primitive than the symbolic. Speech and gesture have developed along parallel lines, not, as many would have us believe, speech from gesture,

G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

**Hereditary and Environmental Factors in the Causation of Manic-Depressive Psychoses and Dementia Praecox.** By H. M. POLLOCK, B. MALZBERG and R. G. FULLER. New York: State Hospitals Press, 1939. Pp. 472. Price \$2.50.

This book is based on the study of 155 first admissions suffering from manic-depressive insanity and 175 suffering from dementia praecox.

The authors regarded the problem from the biogenetic view-point, abandoning all hope of ever finding a pathological foundation for either group.

We feel that the number of cases utilized was far too small to yield results of really convincing statistical value. It is not sufficiently realized that the normal population takes the greatest pains to conceal cases of mental instability of all degrees in the family history, whereas the relatives of a case of mental illness are much more willing to produce the family skeletons from their cupboards.

G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

**The Nature of Thought.** By B. BLANSHARD, B.Sc., Ph.D. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1939. 2 volumes. Pp.: vol. i, 654; vol. ii, 532. Price 32s.

These two volumes contain the results of many years of profound meditation on the part of the author. The reader is greatly assisted in his reading by a most detailed list of contents, chapter by chapter, covering twenty-eight pages in the first volume and thirteen in the second.

The two volumes are divided into four separate parts dealing with "Thought in Perception," "The Theory of the Idea," "The Movement of Reflection," and "The Goal of Thought." The author has attempted as a philosopher to combine psychology and philosophy into a more or less coherent whole. This is a very difficult task, and its successful accomplishment is beyond most psychologists and most philosophers. Prof. Blanshard must be admitted to

have come very near to the ideal. He takes us quietly and systematically through the devious pathways of psychology, gestalt and behaviourism, and through the more indefinite but none the less fascinating by-ways of philosophy.

The opening sentence of the book gives us food for considerable thought—“Thought is that activity of mind which aims directly at truth.” This may be the view of the philosopher and a purely abstract ideal at that, but we doubt if it corresponds to the truth! So much modern thought aims anywhere but at truth, and as the years pass along civilization appears to be tending towards the definition that thought aims directly at untruth.

The two volumes make most interesting reading, and raise many problems which cannot be dealt with in a short review. G. W. T. H. FLEMING.