

Introduction to Clinical Neurology. By GORDON HOLMES, M.D., F.R.S. Second Edition, 1952. Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. Pp. 189. Price 12s. 6d.

This edition differs little from the first apart from the fact that the author has "allotted more space to a few other subjects as the hypothalamus". When we turn up this we find a very brief account of a subject which might well have had a whole chapter devoted to it even in such an "introductory" book as this is. The book, which is a good one, might gain considerably in value by being expanded to twice its present size.

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Hypnosis in Medicine. By A. PHILIP MAGONET. London: William Heinemann, Medical Books, Ltd., 1952. Pp. 104. Price 9s. 6d.

The author, who is President of the Medical Hypnosis Association, describes simply and clearly the technique and phenomena of hypnosis. This takes twelve pages.

Most of the rest of this earnest little book is devoted to medical case histories of obstetrics, psychosomatic disturbances and psychoneuroses. These are developed on usual psychiatric lines except that pertinent points in the history are elucidated or the interpretation is made with the patient in a trance.

"She was a good subject for hypnosis and was soon in a deep trance. I explained to her the real causes of her symptoms . . . The patient was better from the time she woke up."

The whole thing seems so simple and successful. Dr. Magonet uses hypnosis as an aid to normal general practice, and yet one is still not convinced.

There is nothing indeed mysterious about this book's presentation of the case, but the hypnotic state itself appears still to be mysterious. Perhaps it is this which cautions so many doctors against its use.

By what hybrid of the instincts is this curious phenomenon of extreme suggestibility and uncanny rapport produced? One is not impressed by the explanation that "hypnotic phenomena are nothing more than conditioned reflexes".

One hopes that hypnotism, being "now the subject of exact scientific enquiry all over the world", will yield its secret. Perhaps another edition of this book will have more to say on the fundamental nature of the hypnotic trance.

The bibliography also should be completed: one reference in the text is merely to "a recent medical paper"; and in several instances even that degree of reference is omitted.

C. E. H. TURNER.