

be overcrowded or substandard in housing, but it has no other implications for disease. Moreover, they appear to consider that progress in industrial psychology ceased with Rothlisberger and Dickson.

One can, of course, see the authors' problem. Not knowing that first-class work is going on in the behavioural sciences, they feel that to deal with psychological and social factors (apart from a few "hard" indices such as overcrowding) is to open the floodgates to a gush of speculation and gossip. Indeed, the dangers are all too well illustrated in some recent writings on the relations between sociology and medicine. But if serious exponents of social medicine abandon the field, others will not be slow to occupy it.

There is now beginning to be a scientific social psychiatry, in which the epidemiological method is regarded as only one of a wide range of useful techniques, and in which no artificial barrier is erected between social and clinical events, since the manner of their interaction is regarded as the main material for study. Sociology is one of the basic sciences of this subject, as it should be in social medicine; and, for this reason, social psychiatry finds itself, by default, in the van of progress. Eventually, the parent discipline will also realize that it can widen its outlook without lowering its standards, and perhaps this realization will be reflected in future texts on social medicine.

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Problems and Progress in Medical Care. Edited by GORDON MCLACHLAN. 1966. London: Oxford University Press. Pp. 339. Price 25s.

This is a second collection of essays, reporting research which has been supported by the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust. Only one of the studies here deals specifically with a psychiatric topic—that on transitional hostels by Robert Apte. This is the most systematic study that has been carried out so far on the functioning of hostels in Britain, and its results are not very encouraging. It appears that the national policy of hostel development was embarked upon without examination of the actual needs of patients or of the results of hostels that existed already. Local authorities, who are taking the main responsibility for these facilities, differ enormously in their degree of interest—and in their views of how hostels should be organized. So far staff training scarcely exists, and many of the places visited by Dr. Apte are clearly of little or no value in rehabilitating patients for life in the community. The rest of this research, which is to be published elsewhere, should certainly be studied by those responsible for policy-making in mental health services. Elsewhere in the volume, a group of studies on out-patient services will be of some interest to psychiatrists, though the results are rather unexciting in relation of the amount of detailed research that has clearly gone into them.

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