

Progress in Neurology and Psychiatry, Volume VII. Edited by E. A. SPIEGEL, M.D. London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1952. Pp. 604. Price 70s.

This volume maintains the high standard set in the previous six volumes. The book is divided into four sections dealing with basic sciences, neurology, neurosurgery and psychiatry.

A brief account has been added by Sjögren and Hallgren on genetics in neurology and psychiatry, including a brief section on research in twins.

It is interesting to read in the excellent chapter on psychosurgery by Freeman and Watts, that psychosurgery has been banned in the Soviet Union by decree of the Ministry of Health as contradicting fundamental Pavlovian concepts. It is also interesting that Jugoslavia and Czechoslovakia both still employ prefrontal lobotomy! The position in the rest of the world with regard to techniques, etc., is obviously still very fluid, and it will be many years before the position will become stable.

One of the best chapters is that dealing with the pharmacology of the nervous system. This important aspect of neurology and more important still of psychiatry is rapidly becoming a very complicated and difficult subject, but one on which the clinician must keep himself fully informed.

G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

Chronic Alcoholism Brookside Monograph No. 1. By R. J. GIBBINS. Toronto: The University Press, 1953. Pp. 57.

This is a competent and readable account of the present position of chronic alcoholism. The writer points out that most psychological theorists ignore the reasons for drinking alcohol, and for drinking to excess. Tolerance is one of the most important factors to be considered. A high gastric intolerance may save a person from addiction, but a high psychological tolerance may encourage it.

The relation of poverty to alcoholism is not quite so simple as it appears. It used to be considered a factor, but modern investigation has shown that during times of industrial depression there is much less alcoholism, and that the more prosperous levels of the population are just as much addicted to alcohol as are the less prosperous.

It is interesting to read that there are no less than twenty methods of treatment! The writer discusses these in reasonable detail, and in discussing the results from Alcoholics Anonymous points out that the high percentage of cures claimed by A. A. is somewhat due to the fact that the group submitting itself for treatment by A. A. is in the first place a higher selected group, i.e., unlike most alcoholics they have a genuine desire to co-operate and recover, and have religious or spiritual feelings which help them enormously as part of their group therapy. It is of course a most economic therapy.

There is only one answer to alcoholism, and that is the strength of will to be a total abstainer for life!

G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

Annual Review of Psychology. Vol. 4. Edited by C. P. STONE and D. W. TAYLOR. Stanford, California: Annual Reviews Inc., 1953. Price 50s.

The fourth volume of this series has maintained the high standard set in the previous three volumes. The ground covered is much the same, but comparative and physiological psychology have been given separate chapters, which is an improvement. A final chapter on theoretical psychology has been added, dealing with what the writer (G. Bergmann) calls the logic of psychology; this is one of the best chapters in the book.