

**Modern Practice in Psychological Medicine.** Edited by J. R. REES, M.D. London: Butterworth & Co. Ltd., 1949. Pp. xii + 475. Price 50s.

This book is a companion volume to *Modern Trends in Psychological Medicine*, edited by Dr. Noel Harris in 1948. Its approach is wider than that of the previous publication, but in many respects the same ground is covered, and the question arises why two large books should be utilized where one would do.

In this volume we have a group of twenty-nine contributors, and the result is rather a mixed bag. Some of the chapters are distinctly provocative, but the majority are content with giving more or less formal accounts which may be generally acceptable. As in all such books, there is a considerable overlap, which detracts from its value and makes it a little irritating. While books of this type may be useful as works of ready reference, yet they lack the co-ordination obtained by more modest publications. Brock Chisholm, Director-General, World Health Organization, in the initial chapter entitled "Health" gives a wide survey of the topic, especially in terms of a world problem. He emphasizes the place which psychiatry may come to occupy, stresses its preventive aspects, and obviously hopes that through psychiatry we may be enabled to solve a great many of the world's conflicts. He develops the idea by emphasizing the training of the child, and sees the solution of the world's problems in the nursery. There must be no frivolity or romance about this—such things as superstition, fairies and Santa Claus should be discarded; that was the way of foolishness, but now we must have a world where reason and logic hold sway. It is contended that it is only by the realistic training of children that international trouble and war will disappear. To the reviewer, Chisholm's approach is over-enthusiastic and unrealistic, and it is doubtful—to say the best of it—whether this sort of pleading does any good for psychiatry. Here is an example of the argument used: "For instance, given universal mental and social health, such curses as tuberculosis, malaria, smallpox, diphtheria, typhus, venereal diseases, malnutrition and all its results and many others could be eradicated in a very short time." It is believed that a co-ordinated attack on diseases and "more efficient agriculture could change the ugly past and anxious present of the world to a future of progress and hope." It all sounds so easy and so naive, and is so far removed from the actual difficulties of psychiatric work as to convey a totally erroneous impression of how psychiatry may help in the resettlement of a sick world. I trust that the majority of psychiatrists are more modest in their claims, and that they will avoid prescribing panaceas for the conduct of world affairs. We have still plenty to do in our mental hospitals, in our clinics, and in our every-day practice without becoming embroiled in world politics.

The other chapters are much less controversial than Chisholm's. For instance, R. G. Gordon writes in his usual pleasant, lucid way on the make-up of the Normal Individual. His outlook is based largely on McDougall's *Social Psychology*, which is a good and sure guide for anyone. In addition he gives a good description of the normal personality types as formulated by Jung. Geoffrey Thompson, in discussing Abnormal Psychology in relation to Emotional Development, admits that our theories are still tentative, and apologizes for any apparent dogmatism contained in his article. Thompson, however, seems to have no doubt that our infantile beliefs, impulses and fears are the root of all our subsequent troubles, and that they are the principal things to tackle if we are ever to be able to lead satisfactory lives. The manner, for instance, in which we deal with our emotional, sexual and phantasy life during the Oedipal period of our development "has a dominating influence in determining the pattern which sexual life will follow in later years." Such teaching is pretty stiff going for students and general practitioners, for whom this book is intended.

Bennet's chapter, entitled "The Diagnostic Interview," is disappointing. The discussion is a mixture of case-taking and a description of the psychoneuroses, with short and completely inadequate paragraphs dealing with the psychoses and mental deficiency. One would like to have seen this matter dealt with much more comprehensively, and have had more fully and clearly pointed out the inter-relationships between the various groupings, and the frequency with which combinations occur. Surely the purpose of the diagnostic interview is not merely to label a patient, but to form some estimate of prognosis and treatment, and the author might well have enlarged his views along those lines rather than by giving a somewhat formal clinical description of the anxiety state, psychosomatic illness, hysteria and obsessions.

Most of the authors have been greatly influenced by the psycho-analytic school, and this is brought out by Sutherland in his discussion of "Types of Personality." After giving the familiar descriptions associated with the names of Kretschmer, Jung, Sheldon and Pavlov, he expresses the opinion that the psychoanalysts have supplied a much more meaningful approach, "for their types are explained by the history of the person, and, further, the label tells us what forces are operating inside that person so that we can understand him." I wonder whether all that is really so. If it is so then we should be able to do much more for suffering humanity than we have accomplished so far. But surely it is not so easy as all that. The author seems to rely far too much on the opinions expressed by others rather than on his own clinical experience.

Wittkower's article on Psychosomatic Medicine has the great distinction of defining his topic in the following manner: Psychosomatic Medicine embraces (1) disorders—be they functional or organic—in the aetiology of which psychological factors are directly relevant in combination with other causes: for example, nervous dyspepsia and peptic ulcer; (2) disorders in which psychological factors indirectly play a predisposing and precipitating rôle, e.g. venereal disease; (3) disabilities, in the aetiology of which psychological factors play no part, but which are associated with emotional disturbance, e.g. war disablement. There is much in this article which is worthy of praise, but far too much emphasis and importance is attached to the delineation of types. For instance, the patient with migraine is ambitious, meticulous and exacting; a hay-fever patient is shut in and hypersensitive (I have known many who are not); the inoffensive, accommodating, convivial behaviour of the hypertensive patient "serves to camouflage strong hostile impulses and anxiety. Their need to make themselves well liked, coupled with potency doubts, accounts for their preference for wine, women and song." The above uncritical theorizing does not do credit to British psychiatry, and is out of place in a book designed for students and general practitioners.

The best article in the book, without making any invidious distinction, is by Main, who discusses "Industrial Stress and Psychiatric Illness." Main deals with the facts, he provides us with case-records, and he analyses the situation in which the disturbance is occurring. He appreciates that job placement is no panacea, and is successful only when it is used wisely. He points out that job-dissatisfaction is as often a symptom as the cause of the upset, and that no amount of environmental change will do any good unless backed and accompanied by psychiatric treatment. His observation in relation to the importance of minor intellectual defect in producing industrial misfits is something which should be much more clearly realized, because the amount of emotional instability among those intellectually involved is very serious. The social significance of this unstable dullard group is emphasized.

This book, then, may be regarded as a comprehensive survey of psychosomatic medicine, but it is essentially a book of reference for those with experience and not a satisfactory guide for students and general practitioners.

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