

lucidly discussed here have now become practical issues, and the number of people concerned with them is bound to grow rapidly as the result of the new legislation. The publishers will be well advised to enclose a note to this effect into the book, in case individuals or organizations should think that it is out of date.

E. STENGEL.

Schizophrenia. By MANFRED SAKEL. Peter Owen Ltd., London. Pp. 335. Price 35s.

The late Manfred Sakel was a tragic figure. His was a remarkable success story. An unknown young psychiatrist, he succeeded in persuading the all-powerful head of a famous psychiatric university institute to offer him all the facilities at his disposal for a new treatment of schizophrenia. Insulin coma treatment was soon adopted all over the world and opened up a new era in the treatment of the major psychoses. Sakel's place in the history of psychiatry is secure, whatever the fate of his therapy may be. Yet he was never satisfied with the kind of fame it brought him, and he died a deeply disappointed man. He wanted to be recognized not only as a bold pioneer in the field of therapy, but also as a scientist and thinker. Learned societies often appear ungrateful to the brilliant innovator who stimulates progress but refuses to submit to the discipline of science. This book explains why full scientific recognition was withheld from Sakel. It shows an amazing lack of humility and of other attributes of the scientific attitude. Much of the book makes embarrassing reading, especially the theoretical chapters in which the author propounds a peculiar brain mythology of his own. He firmly believed in the specificity of his treatment which "eliminates psychotic intercellular pathways". In his opinion, schizophrenia is caused by a dysfunction of "the insular and adreno-cortical system". The limitations of the treatment are not discussed. The "classical" method, which is described in detail, cannot have fulfilled his expectations, because later he recommended extremely prolonged comas in many cases. The value of this posthumous book, and of its companion volume dealing with epilepsy, is mainly historical. It tells a great deal about the man who shook psychiatry out of its therapeutic inertia.

E. STENGEL.

Family Worlds. A Psychological Approach to Family Life. By ROBERT D. HESS and GERALD HANDEL. University of Chicago Press, 1959. Pp. 306.

The authors, both of whom are social psychologists, have studied the problem how a family functions. There are the biologically determined universals of family life, and there are other features which are culturally determined. The latter show a greater variety than the former. Five "psycho-social family portraits" are presented in this book. The unit of study was the typical American "nuclear family", i.e. the parents with their biological children. The data were obtained by interviewing each member of the family. The TAT and a sentence-completion test were applied to each person. The authors found that each family had a "family theme", i.e. a pattern of feelings, motives and fantasies grouped about some concern, such as "flight from insecurity" or "demonstration of constructive independence", etc. They aim at a typology of family interaction patterns. This is a promising pilot study in an important area of research. Knowledge about the social aspects of normal family life is essential for the understanding of disturbed family relationships which so often become the concern of the psychiatrist.

E. STENGEL.

A Short History of Psychiatry. By ERWIN ACKERKNECHT. Translated from the German by SULAMMITH WOLFF. Hafner Publications Coy., New York and London, 1959. Pp. 98. Price 25s.

This is a useful little book which deserves to be widely read, especially by psychiatrists in training. The author, who is Professor of the History of Medicine in the University of Zurich, views psychiatry as a branch of medicine. He is also interested in its ethnological aspects. However, he tends to overrate the existing knowledge about