

however, very elementary. The dust jacket states that it is a guide for practitioners and students of psychiatry. It would seem, however, more suitable for the medical student or psychiatric nurse. No serious student of psychiatry would find sufficient material or detail. It is a pity that no references are given which would enable the reader who was stimulated to extend his knowledge.

One chapter is headed "Aspects of child-psychiatry, senile and puerperal reactions"; this does seem a most curious mixture, and there is nothing in the text to explain why these very different aspects of psychiatry are described together. Also, in this chapter it is suggested that the schizophrenic mother may kill her child and this is a very real danger. This is one of the psychiatric myths which the facts do not support. The real risk of injury to the child lies with the depressed mother. The risk in schizophrenia is of neglect.

The price is reasonable. The fact that this is now the sixth edition shows that the book has had some popularity. The general practitioner may find its practical approach and brevity an advantage but, here again, some references would make it very much more valuable to him. The book does live up to the claim of its preface for soundness and clarity.

A. A. BAKER

*Clinical Psychiatry for the Layman.* By F. J. FISH. Bristol: John Wright & Sons, Ltd. 1963. Pp. 59. Price 8s. 6d.

This little book arose out of the need to provide theological students and mental health officers with some of the fundamental facts of clinical psychiatry.

The Church and lay public today is becoming more and more aware of the necessity to understand human behaviour in the light of psychological research and knowledge of the cause and effects of emotional disturbances.

However, the language of psychiatry is often a barrier to the layman who requires some simple reference to psychological terminology and a description of the varieties of mental disturbances. These are provided in this book. To condense such information into so few pages has led to dogmatism and perhaps over-simplification of psychiatric illness and of this the author is clearly aware. It however fulfils a need, and will help intelligent laymen to a more tolerant understanding and sympathy for the emotionally disabled.

J. T. ROBINSON.

*Textbook of Abnormal Psychology.* By N. H. PRONKO. London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1963. Pp. xxiii + 446. Price 68s.

This book is written by the Professor of Psychology in the University of Wichita and has a foreword by Professor Szasz, the author of *The Myth of Mental Illness*, who tells us: "Professor Pronko has no 'system' and frankly admits it. This, I think, is all to the good. Instead of a system of 'abnormal psychology' he gives us the fruits of his prodigious labours: he has culled from the recent and the classic literature of psychology and psychiatry, using his critical intelligence as his guide, those contributions which he considered significant for the contemporary student.

Needless to say the first chapter consists of a short summary of *The Myth of Mental Illness*. This is followed by a chapter discussing the relation of brain injuries to mental disorders which follows the usual line adopted by American "dynamic" psychologists and leaves one with the impression that the cranium might just as well be filled with sawdust as with nervous tissue. The treatment of genetics in this chapter reveals that strange American tendency to reject the idea that anything apart from arms and legs can be the result of inherited factors. In fact the uninstructed "contemporary student" might be misled into believing that even Huntington's chorea and all varieties of mental defect have no genetic basis.

However, what of Professor Pronko's selections from the classic literature of psychiatry? Since this was mainly written in French and German, Professor Pronko, who is apparently unacquainted with these languages, must depend on secondary sources. He seems unaware of such important works as Brill's translation of Eugen Bleuler's textbook and Barclay's translation of the section of Kraepelin's textbook on "Manic-depressive Insanity and Paranoia", so that he naturally is a victim of one of the "Myths of American Psychiatry" which is known as "*Kraepelinian Psychiatry*", but should be called "*Pseudo-Kraepelinian Psychiatry*". This bears as much relation to the views of Kraepelin as the "*Social Workers' Psychodynamics*" does to the ideas of Freud. Thus in the chapter on "Deterioration" we are told "Following Rothschild, Gallinek (1948) has been critical of the well entrenched theory of Kraepelin that sees the psychoses of old age as being due to either cerebral degeneration or cerebral arteriosclerosis".

However, in 1896 Kraepelin stated that the majority of mental disorders in old age were depressive states. In a later edition of his textbook, the relevant part of which has been translated into