

Study of Autism

Infantile Autism. The Syndrome and Its Implications for a Neural Theory of Behaviour. By Bernard Rimland. (Pp. 282 + xi. \$5.00.) New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts. 1964.

Dr. Rimland offers a comprehensive study of infantile autism, and his book needs to be taken seriously. The approach to the subject is carefully constructed. The various theories are given full attention. Of the literature nothing has been deliberately set aside, and in Part 3 Dr. Rimland attempts to round off the subject by stating his personal opinion and by developing a theory of autism which he claims has implications for a total theory of behaviour.

I come to this subject with a certain prejudice, and it is this prejudice that Rimland disagrees with. I came to Kanner's statement of autism with a considerable experience of childhood psychosis, and I have never seen a clear reason why this group should be theoretically cut off from the total subject of schizophrenia of infancy and childhood. Undoubtedly the clear-cut designation "autism" had a value for teaching purposes. Here was something that could be given to the paediatrician comparable to the diseases of the body with which paediatricians are familiar. It was possible to teach students about autism without involving them in a theory of the emotional development of the human being in the same way as it is possible to teach acute nephritis apart from a theory of the evolution in phylogeny and ontogeny of the kidney. There are many workers in the field of child psychiatry who fully support the opinion of Rimland that here too is a disease syndrome, and that, although in more than half the cases no physical dysfunction can be discovered by present methods of investigation, the prediction is that the tools of investigation are not sensitive enough and that in the course of time the whole syndrome will become explained on the basis of a physical dysfunction.

All one can do at this point is to put up the claim that a decision on this matter has not been reached. Certainly it is necessary that while methods of examining the physical functions are being refined other workers in the field should be studying in minutest detail the earliest stages of the establishment of the personality. The arguments for and against are well set out in this book, except that in my opinion Dr. Rimland does not show himself to be fully up to date in regard to the study of the earliest stages of integration of the personality when dependence is near-absolute.

It would be possible to stop here and leave the reader to use this book as an important statement of the problem. I feel,

however, that it is justifiable to suggest that the last section of the book develops into a system of thought, and that this system of thought has as its basis the area of the author's ignorance of these very matters which have importance in the study of this subject—namely, the theory of early development which leads to the observation that the mental health of the individual (referring to the positive of which schizophrenia is the negative) is being laid down at the beginning by the mother simply through her total care of her child. The author of the book might legitimately throw this back at me, and say that my theory in its turn is a system of thought; in other words, this very important matter is still *sub judice*.

I think it is of interest that the extensively planned diagnostic check list, with 76 items, does not contain the question that could produce the significant answer. But such is the way with questionnaires which cannot do more than test the bright ideas of those who are capable of being creative.

D. W. WINNICOTT.

Cataract Operation

Cataract Operation by Enzymatic Zonulolysis. By Dr. Hans Hofmann. (Pp. 118 + x; illustrated. 52s.) London: Baillière, Tindall and Cassell. 1966.

Cataract extraction, though in general one of the most satisfactory of surgical operations, remains hazardous because considerable surgical dexterity is required if unnecessary damage to a delicate organ is to be avoided, and the margin between success and failure remains narrow, especially if the eye is weak on account of myopia or has suffered from inflammatory or haemorrhagic troubles. Intracapsular extraction is now universally regarded as superior to extracapsular, since the defective part is completely removed, but surgical rupture of the fibres of the zonular ligament can be a difficult procedure if these fibres are strong and especially if the lens capsule, which is grasped by either forceps or suction apparatus, is weak. During the past ten years enzymatic zonulolysis has been employed by many surgeons, and generally satisfactory results and few complications have been reported.

The use of a proteolytic enzyme for this purpose was discovered by Joaquin Barraquer, who in 1957 injected an eye suffering from recurrent vitreous haemorrhages in an attempt to promote rapid clearing. The object was not achieved, but this astute observer noted that the zonule had been destroyed and that the lens had dislocated, and decided after experiments on animals and blind human eyes to put this observation to practical use. He found that by perfusing the anterior chamber

with 1/5,000 alpha-chymotrypsin lysis of the zonule was produced without apparent damage to other ocular structures. This innovation renders accidental rupture of the lens capsule less frequent in the hands of surgeons of moderate dexterity and made it possible, though not it is thought advisable, to employ intracapsular technique even on congenital cataracts. Some experienced surgeons, however, still feel that the use of a powerful proteolytic enzyme in the eye is unnecessary and undesirable, and that its use should perhaps be confined to cataracts occurring in middle age, when the zonule is apt to be tough and the lens capsule weak.

This book describes the principles of enzymatic zonulolysis, including the effect on structures other than the zonule, and discusses the clinical applications in detail. The only common complication reported is delayed healing of the wound, and the author considers that there is no contraindication to enzymatic zonulolysis except in juvenile cataract.

HAROLD RIDLEY.

Protides

Protides of the Biological Fluids. 13th Colloquium, Bruges, 1965. Edited by H. Peters. (Pp. 476 + x; illustrated. £7 5s.) Amsterdam, London, and New York: Elsevier. 1966.

This, the 13th of the Bruges symposia, concentrates on the lipoproteins and the proteins of the nervous system. It is a volume for specialists. Specialists sometimes disagree.

The section dealing with the various fractions of protein in the central nervous system unexpectedly contains an interesting short article on drug-induced blocking of sterol synthesis by Fumagalli and his colleagues from Milan.

Lajtha, Richter, and others deal adequately with protein metabolism of the brain, though there does not seem to be a great deal to add to the recent competent reviews that have been published, and there is much that still requires to be worked out. It is a pity that in the section on the structure and function of lipoproteins the article by Ott and his collaborators on the kinetics of fatty acid binding by human serum albumin could not be reported in greater detail. There are indeed an almost sufficient number of articles on albumin to group these on an independent section. Thus, there are interesting articles on genetic variants of albumin as well as its metabolism in pre-eclampsia.

I found this volume rather more diffuse than some of the previous monographs, but this may be due to the complexity of the field chosen for presentation.

N. H. MARTIN.

Books Received

Review is not precluded by notice here of books recently received.

Evidence in Science. By Kenneth Stone, D.M.(Oxon.), M.R.C.P.(Lond.). (Pp. 116 + vi. 17s. 6d.) Bristol: John Wright. 1966.

Thrombohemorrhagic Phenomena. By Hans Selye. (Pp. 337 + xxviii. \$19.50.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1966.

Lung Tumours in Animals. Proceedings of Conference, Perugia, 1965. Edited by Lucio Severi, M.D. (Pp. 970 + lxii; illustrated. £14 7s.) Perugia: Division of Cancer Research. 1966.

Help Yourselves. A Handbook for Hemiplegics and their Families. By P. E. Jay, S.R.O.T., M.A.O.T., E. Walker, S.R.O.T., M.A.O.T., and A. Ellison, S.R.O.T., M.A.O.T. (Pp. 90 + x; illustrated. 8s. 6d.) London: Butterworth. 1966.

Children of Sick Parents. By Michael Rutter, M.D., M.R.C.P., D.P.M. (Pp. 146 + x. 45s.) New York, Toronto, and London: Oxford University Press. 1966.

The Radiochemical Manual. 2nd edition. Edited by B. J. Wilson. (Pp. 327; illustrated. 50s.) Amersham: Radiochemical Centre. 1966.

The Hunger to Come. By John Laffin. (Pp. 208. 25s.) London, New York, and Toronto: Abelard-Schuman. 1966.