

Psychiatry. Second edition. E. W. ANDERSON, M.D., M.Sc., F.R.C.P., D.P.M and W. H. TRETOWAN, M.B., F.R.C.P., F.R.A.C.P., F.A.N.Z.C.P., D.P.M. London. Baillière, Tindall & Cassell. 1967. Pp. 319. Price 25s. 0d.

This book is like the curate's egg, good in parts. It gives an excellent brief historical survey of the development of psychiatry and an equally good summary of the legal aspects of psychiatry and of statutory and voluntary services concerned with the mentally ill. The main part of the book is taken up by a description of the various mental disorders ranging from chronic organic syndromes to mental subnormality. The book is chiefly addressed to medical students and to trainees in fields allied to psychiatry. No doubt, careful reading and memorizing of much of what is said in the book about the various mental diseases will make the passing of examinations easier.

Psychiatry and its allied disciplines have, however, risen to much greater importance in general medicine than in the days when the psychiatrist was still the alienist. In general practice, which in this country has nowadays become the most important part of medicine, a new outlook has been developing. New concepts, such as the understanding of the patient's motivations and instinctual drives, in addition to a knowledge of physiological and biochemical facts, and of the impact of the patient's personality on the doctor, as well as the part played by emotions in illness and recovery, have arisen and are being actively investigated.

Increasing demands are being made by patients and by the development of medical knowledge generally on the perceptivity and perspicacity of general practitioners for the understanding of their patients' emotional and mental health problems, irrespective of whether the patient's illness is apparently organic or psychic. To this increasingly more important part that psychiatry could play in general medicine the book has little to contribute.

It is a great pity that this well-written and well-intended book should not only divulge the present-day deficiencies of psychiatric teaching to medical undergraduates, but try to perpetuate it, because both Professor Anderson and Professor Trethowan are very distinguished psychiatrists, who have made valuable contributions to community mental health and problems that lie on the borderline between psychiatry and general medicine.

The treatment of disease by acupuncture. Second edition. FELIX MANN, M.B., B.Chir., L.M.C.C. London. William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1967. Pp. 180. Price 42s. 0d.

The author has already published a book describing Chinese acupuncture's 'basic principles and laws', one portraying its 59 meridians and an 'Atlas of acupuncture'. It may be unfair to expect to make anything of the present book without having read at least the first so the present reviewer must declare himself uninitiated.

To him at first glance the book looked like a handbook to practical acupuncture and indeed it may well help the equivalent of senior registrar in Chinese medicine to practise the art, but to the uninitiated it is almost completely incomprehensible and serves only to show how deep, wide and unbridgable is the gulf between the traditional Chinese conception of the body and its workings in health and sickness and ours. The untutored medical reader will know no more how, when, where and why to puncture at the book's end than at its start.