

of the mind. Unlike the later oedipal relationship which involves three people 'the basic fault' involves only two. Balint postulates, in place of Freud's primary narcissism, a condition of primary love, in which an infant is in 'a harmonious interpenetrating mix-up' with his environment. If this harmonious mix-up does not occur, or is interfered with, in the area of the basic fault, neuroses are liable to develop in later life, and Dr Balint discusses possible techniques, differing from classical analysis, for dealing with them.

This attempted simplification of thoughts both difficult and profound will indicate that the reader must work hard to understand the book, but if he does, his rewards may be considerable. Many fascinating subjects are touched on, including the child residing in the man (Wordsworth could have understood analysis), the nature of creativity, and the misunderstandings caused by the use of words to express feelings. This important book should be valuable to all analysts and to many who practise psychotherapy.

**Clinical psychopharmacology.** MICHAEL SHEPHERD, M.A., D.M., M.R.C.P., D.P.M., MALCOLM LADER, B.Sc., Ph.D., M.D., D.P.M., RICHARD RODNIGHT, B.Sc., Ph.D. London. English Universities Press 1968. Pp. xiv+306. Price £2 10s.

Psychopharmacology has a forbidding ring; one imagines a lot of chemical molecular structural formulae drawings, detailed discussion of enzyme actions and speculations on action of drugs discussed in the language of the pharmacologist. This book contains a great amount of interesting and challenging information. The teaming up of a psychiatrist of Professor Shepherd's wide-ranging interests, with a pharmacologist and a biochemist has made for a readable and interesting approach, which has a great attraction for a general practitioner in that they seem to come to a practical evaluation of each group of drugs discussed. Not only an evaluation, but also the likely mode and method of action, along with side effects, toxic effects or disappointing failures, are discussed.

This book makes a worthwhile contribution to the elucidation of what pharmacology is all about, 'Pharmakon'—the magic remedy. In this, primitive man showed great ingenuity in discovering in naturally occurring plants or animals, magical drugs affecting or exciting the mind. The present upsurge of interest, frequently represented as progress in the control of mental illness, is epitomized with the introduction of chlorpromazine and reserpine, and extended by the clinical observation that imipramine appeared to have an effect on depression though it could not be classed a central nervous stimulant.

The book discusses the evidence for all the various claims of psychotropic drugs which through most of its 300 pages manages to fascinate even those untrained in biochemistry and pharmacology. In the 1930s and 1940s the treatment of mental illness had fallen into an almost cynical attitude of lowered sight on achieving restraint and tranquility or isolation. The physical treatment method seemed crude and empirical. The dawn came with chlorpromazine which promised to bring light and understanding by pharmacotherapy, and thus the treatment of mental illness would follow the line of progress with the other branches of medicine where antibacterials, bacteriostatic drugs, and the analysis of action of drugs had laid the foundation of a scientific approach to therapy.

This volume however shows clearly that we are only at the beginning of understanding what the drug-conscious modern patient is so inevitably seeking, and de Quincey attributed to opium:

1. To tranquilize all irritations of the nervous system
2. To stimulate the capacities of enjoyment
3. Under any call for extraordinary exertion (such as all men meet at times)

to sustain through 24 consecutive hours the otherwise drooping animal energies.

This volume grapples most logically and clearly with the difficulties of language, which is inherent when two disciplines are brought together. For instance, depression to the psychiatrist is a definite clinical problem; the pharmacologist however, only understands it as lessening the function of any organ. It was found illuminating to read the consequential discussion of definition in the chapter on antidepressant drugs. The discussion of the monoamine oxidase inhibitors is balanced and sobering, particularly when the various antidepressants are evaluated within each group of drugs, such as the tricyclic antidepressants. The lack of successful and authoritative comparative clinical trials by which to justify the millions of tablets ingested annually is a terrifying thought, and either shows the tremendous success of their promotion by various makers or the emotional attitude of prescribers, still looking for the magic remedy. Naturally, ECT is also extensively discussed, as is drug addiction. Though in no position to criticize, I was sorry the authors did not see fit to refer to the basic work of Sir Jack Gaddum on lysergic acid in their so very erudite series of references.

As with most books in a field where the frontiers of knowledge are pushed back continuously, this one may well be out of date in some of its important discussions (for instance lithium therapy), yet its very objectives and wide discussion will make it a most worthwhile review book for some years to come of a tremendously vital subject.

**Guide to steroid therapy.** PICTON THOMAS, M.D., M.R.C.P. London. Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books) Ltd. 1968. Pp. viii+223. Price 37s. 6d.

Steroid therapy is now widely used in most departments of medicine, but its role in the suppression and modification of symptoms is still a matter for argument and conjecture.

Dr Picton Thomas's book falls into two parts. The first section is general, and deals with the chemistry and complications of steroid therapy, the effect on endogenous endocrine function, and tests of that function as a guide to the chemical results of therapy. The second section describes substitution therapy, treatment with androgens, oestrogens, progestins and aldosterone, and the use and abuse of corticosteroids in diseases of every system of the body. A valuable feature is its firm selection of those situations in which corticosteroid therapy is *not* likely to be of value, and its insistence on the suppressive function of these drugs. A patient first faced with the necessity for such treatment is likely to be alarmed if he is moderately well-informed, but later he and his doctor may be lulled into a sense of false security as symptoms disappear. It is important to remember that corticosteroids never cure, often cause toxic effects and may make some diseases worse. This book maintains a due sense of proportion, and is a useful guide for the general practitioner faced with the management of patients on long-term treatment. The references at the end of each chapter furnish the means of more detailed information for those who seek it.

**Modern trends in pharmacology and therapeutics.** Edited by W. F. M. FULTON, B.Sc., M.D., M.R.C.P. London. Butterworths. 1967. Pp. x+372. Price £4 5s.

A welcome development in the teaching of medicine has been the tendency towards integration of pure pharmacology with its clinical application, and an increasing establishment of university departments of pharmacology and thera-