

**A Human Approach to General Practice.** C. P. ELLIOTT-BINNS, M.B., B.CH., D.C.H., D.OBST.R.C.O.G. Edin and Lond. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1963. P. v + 76. Price 7s. 6d.

After seven years in general practice Dr Elliott-Binns has collected together his experiences and produced a most readable and wise appraisal of the pleasures and disappointments of practice. His attitude towards the National Health Service and the present state of general practice is refreshing after so much has been written of its hardships and frustrations. In his own words:

It seems extraordinary that some people say that general practice is "not what it was" or is "on its way out". Admittedly there are many problems, some of them due to the sudden and arbitrary appearance of the National Health Service. However, the important fact is that the present-day general practitioner with the aid of his clinical sense and the contents of his medical bag, can cure most diseases single-handed, effectively, and economically. Also he is in a better position than anyone, even a psychiatrist, for dealing with minor functional complaints and domestic problems. If therefore the general practitioner cannot stand up to the challenge of being able to do his job properly, the fault lies in himself. To solve the present difficulties what is most needed is more co-operation between the practitioners themselves, and the realization that practice has evolved and is still evolving, and that useless or harmful ideas should be discarded.

This short inexpensive book is worth reading by any general practitioner—the new entrant to general practice, and indeed the houseman—who is thinking of becoming a general practitioner will find in it much to stimulate his thought.

**Methods of Psychiatric Research.** Edited by P. SAINSBURY, B.A., M.D., D.P.H., and N. KREITMAN, M.D., D.P.H. Lond., N.Y., Toronto. Oxford University Press. 1963. Pp. vii + 175; price 35s.

In November 1962 the Research Committee of the Council of the College of General Practitioners issued a 50 page booklet entitled *A Guide to Research in General Practice*. The volume under review is larger, more comprehensive, more sophisticated, and many of the chapters apply strictly to psychiatric work, but it is interesting to note that this book is essentially similar, and working on the same lines as the College publication. There are some 14 chapters each by different authors covering many practical aspects of the problem from how to set about choosing a subject for research, down to the final phase of how to write up the findings as a scientific paper. All the chapters are eminently readable, some being more technical than others, but they are full of useful tips and advice. "When copying out references to make a bibliography, it is a good idea to write them out on cards, to facilitate rearrangement later." In the list of major libraries no mention is made of that of the B.M.A. which gives excellent service. One function of the reviewer is to point out omissions. He suggests that a doctor with a special interest should from the very start attempt to collect every paper and reprint on his own subject as a private collection, leaving the library to fill in any

gaps. We are told that there are three types of study, the cross sectional type which studies the situation as it is here and now; the prospective study which follows the progress of the patient into the future, and the hazardous retrospective study of the past. No worker is more fitted to conduct a prospective study than the family doctor who can observe his patients closely over the years. The use of the general practitioner is mentioned from time to time, and the late Dr Mayer-Gross suggested that collaboration with the College of General Practitioners was worth considering. Statistical methods, ratings, punch cards, surveys, genetics are all described and evaluated. Because of the subjective nature of psychiatry, research is in fact more difficult than with organic disease where objective findings, chemical, serological, or radiological changes may often be demonstrated. Research in general practice has many of these self same difficulties, and even if objective tests are applicable, they are not often as readily available to the general practitioner as to the hospital doctor. This excellent book deserves the widest publicity among all who are interested in research, no matter what their field. It is especially useful to those who undertake observational research.

**An Introduction to Physical Methods of Treatment in Psychiatry.** Fourth edition. WILLIAM SARGANT, M.A., M.B., F.R.C.P., and ELIOT SLATER, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., assisted by PETER DALLY, M.B., M.R.C.P. Edin. and London. E. and S. Livingstone, Ltd. 1963. Pp. vii + 346. Price 30s.

The authors state that this book is in its main emphasis a report on methods of treatment they have used personally, and of their own findings obtained with them. They make it clear also that this is not a complete text-book; such subjects as physiotherapy and occupational therapy are not discussed. What they do discuss as physical methods of treatment comprise drug treatment, (including drugs to aid psychotherapy), convulsion therapy, prefrontal leucotomy, continuous sleep treatment, modified insulin therapy, and insulin stupor and coma. As the experience of the authors is very extensive, these parts of the book are of great interest and authority. Apart from drug treatment, the methods described are not usually undertaken in family practice, but reference to the book would be helpful to a general practitioner wishing to understand why a psychiatrist recommends a particular treatment for a patient, and to weigh up its advantages and risks.

There are also chapters on diet, vitamins and endocrines (by Dr John Pollitt), on epilepsy (by Professor Denis Hill), on the treatment of alcoholic and other addictions (which designedly does not include morphia or cocaine), and a final chapter entitled The Relation of Psychological to Somatic Treatment.

This final chapter appears to differ in aim from the rest of the book, which is in the main an admirably clear exposition of actual experience in the techniques of the therapies described. But in this chapter the authors appear to be emotionally involved in a defence of their mechanistic approach and an attack on the claims of those who practise psychotherapy. Physical methods are proving valuable, especially in the psychoses. On