Mental Hospitals at Work. By Kathleen Jones and Roy Sidebotham. (Pp. x+210; 29 tables. 30s.) London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1962.

This important study by a sociologist and an accountant is of the working of three contrasting mental hospitals—a private institution, an old-fashioned County Asylum undergoing modernization, and a small hospital with teaching connexions and a mixed clientele. In the introduction the authors point out that the apparent decline in admissions in mental hospitals is probably less than appears, and they make out a good case for the continuing existence of separate mental hospitals. The body of the book contains an ingenious analysis of the needs and resources of three hospitals culminating in an effort to produce the approximate cost of a short stay case. It is interesting to find that this analysis actually shows the private hospital to be cheaper by this method of calculation than the others. The authors, however, are careful to point out that although this seems to be related to the increased amount of doctor-time given to each patient, a lot of factors enter into the difference, and, in any case, it by no means follows that if the predominantly upper-class clientele of this hospital is helped by doctors, then the other social classes will be equally assisted.

The clinical data in this book are, of course, minimal as neither author is a physician, much less a psychiatrist. However, they plausibly argue that in the present state of diagnostic confusion in psychiatry the amount of labour required to produce further clinical data would not have been justified.

This book is an important contribution to the on-going discussion on the best way of organizing treatment for mentally ill patients. Although the financial analysis is extremely important and should be studied by everyone concerned with hospital administration, the authors most creditably stress throughout that purely financial considerations alone do not cover more than a small part of the problem of assessing efficiency.

D. A. POND

Living with Mental Illness. A Study in East London. By Enid Mills. (Pp. xii+184; 13 tables. 28s.) London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1962.

This fascinating sociological survey of a group of men and women from an East London borough who were admitted for psychiatric treatment to Long Grove Hospital at Epsom during the years 1956-7 is the most recent of the reports of the Institute of Community Studies. Although the Mental Health Act of 1959 has intervened since the study was made, the picture it conveys of the impact of mental illness within the family and throughout its neighbourhood is, as Professor Carstairs points out, still largely that existing in most of our big cities today. Miss Mills interviewed 86 patients and their relatives, and her book records what sort of events led up to their entry into Long Grove, the sometimes traumatic experiences of admission and hospitalization, attitudes of both groups towards mental illness, their home and family background

and the perception of mental illness with its relation to patterns of residence in hospital. Amongst some of her more saddening conclusions are the still-existing ignorance and even antipathy of many general practitioners to psychiatric treatment; the mental hospital tradition that, since he is irresponsible in a specific respect, the patient can be regarded as such in all respects and treated as a child or even discussed in his presence as if he did not exist; the truly appalling confusion in the social services when the ex-patient's personal affairs are delegated not to one but to many different bodies; and the tendency of some Disabled Resettlement Officers to regard the quiet or withdrawn but physically healthy depressive or schizophrenic as merely "work-shy" or "lazy". No dry statistical study, this book is a vivid and at times even amusing account of the interpersonal relations of the mentally sick in the closely-knit neighbourhood atmosphere of a working-class London borough.

J. A. C. BROWN

Cell Function. By L. L. Langley. (Pp. xii + 377; illustrated. 60s.) New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation; London: Chapman & Hall. 1961.

This is an American student textbook at the elementary level, sub-titled "An introduction to the Physiology of the Cell and its Role in the Intact Organism". The author appears either to have attempted too much or to have taken too little space to achieve his object, and, while it may provide easy supplementary reading matter for students, the book is unlikely to provide the necessary instruction for most elementary courses in general physiology.

The approach to the topic of cell function is in three sections, and the consulting editor states that "a balance is held between cellular structure and function and also between the contribution which the cell makes to the structure and function of the whole organism". The third section attempts to cover general aspects of tissues and details of the nervous, circulatory, respiratory, urinary, and endocrine systems in just over 100 pages and is inevitably very superficial. Nor does this section appear to have benefited greatly from the foundations laid in the previous sections on functional anatomy of the cell and intracellular activities. Inexact and unexplained statements are regrettably common.

A final section of the book contains four chapters devoted to what are called basic background principles which briefly summarize elementary physical principles of electricity and molecular activity, the statistical treatment of experimental results, and some methods used in modern cell physiology studies.

Each chapter contains a useful summary and some test questions. The format is extremely clear.

The reviewer cannot recommend this volume as an alternative to the more adequate separate elementary texts covering cell physiology and mammalian physiology, which are available to students of general physiology.

M. K. JOHNSON