BOOK REVIEWS

MEDICINE IN INDUSTRY
By Bernhard J. Stern

The New York Academy of Medicine’s Committee on Medicine and the Changing Order has selected titles and authors for a series of monographs. It is to this series that the present work belongs, and its author occupies a chair in Sociology. An American writing about American problems, he is careful to set against the advances that have been made the inadequacies that are apparent in the scheme of things, and to point out directions in which work needs to be done. An early chapter surveys the history of legislation on occupational diseases, draws the parallel between English and American laws, and discusses the complications of transference of responsibility from State to Federal authority. In a chapter on the incidence of industrial injuries and poisoning, accident rates are dealt with in relation to different industries; the discussion is supported by an abundance of statistics, many of which have obvious limitations, the statistics sometimes perhaps overburdening the text. The handicapped worker’s present position is examined, and also the means available for his rehabilitation and placing in suitable work: it is interesting to note, bearing in mind the formation of our own Register of Disabled Persons, that the number of people with some disability in the U.S.A. is estimated at 24 million. Too many workers appear to be rejected at pre-employment examinations for inadequate reasons. A discussion of the preventive measures and the provision of adequate medical supervision in factories leaves the impression that all is not well, for there, as in this country, factory medical services are inadequate, and small plants very often do without the services of a doctor at all; strenuous efforts are being made, however, and it may be that American thought in the matter is in advance of our own. But the author points out that, even when there exists such good machinery as the Industrial Hygiene Division of the U.S. Public Health Service to investigate toxicological and other problems, the interest and co-operation shown by managements of industry is much below what it could be. This is an attractively produced volume with an extensive bibliography and tables, of the general aspects of the subject at the end of each section; it makes no pretence to be a work of reference, but there is plenty of food for thought in its pages, and as a sociological document it is admirable. One will wish to read it again in years to come when the Changing Order has had its chance to right the wrongs.

J. N. A.

N.A.P.T. HANDBOOK OF TUBERCULOUS ACTIVITIES
Edited by Harley Williams, M.D. 12th edition.
Pp. 275. 7s. 6d.

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JOB PLACEMENT OF THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED
By Clark D. Bridges

Here is a reference book written by a layman to help other laymen, employers, personnel managers, and all who may have to deal with the disabled. It will, too, provide a stimulus to factory medical officers who like to see their disabled people satisfactorily placed in work. The book should not escape the notice of any who practise in an industrial area, for besides providing for the non-medical reader a balanced, accurate, and reasonably simple summary of the commoner maladies and the disabilities they produce, it also analyses the physical requirements of industrial occupations in general in a way that is helpful to those whose practice does not often lead them into places where men do their daily work. The assessment of a man, and of the job he is to be asked to do, are both equally necessary for satisfactory placement; and after some pages in which the employability of disabled persons is emphasized, the author’s attention turns to accurate assessment of jobs. A complicated specimen job-analysis form is shown, and its 155 sections are then discussed, with diverting sketches. The detail within the form is considerable, and it is doubtful if such a document would be useful except for someone whose whole time was given to job analysis. A complementary form demonstrates how a comprehensive medical examination for job placement is conducted and could be recorded; on a third form an attempt is made to simplify the doctor’s recommendations to the personnel department about a disabled man. The largest section of the book describes specific disabilities caused by common illnesses or impairments of the special senses. These are arranged according to systems of the body, and in general are admirably described. Some of the medical terminology familiar to the doctor might prove difficult to the layman, for whom the descriptions are clearly intended, and it is a little difficult to see what advantage the latter can obtain from such highly technical information as the list of the signs which lead us to a diagnosis of quiescence, arrest, or apparent arrest, of a tuberculous lesion. A fuller explanation of peptic ulceration, and the sufferer’s outlook and dietary needs, might have taken its place. It is surprising, but welcome, to come upon detailed lists of chemical agents and the toxic manifestations to be expected from them, lists of the causes of toxic anaemia, and the like; but these might be of more value if they were shortened to include only the commoner causes. The extensive appendices include sections on evaluation of the severely handicapped; a list of institutions interested in industrial health problems in the United States, and of voluntary organizations for rehabilitation of the handicapped, neither of which can assist us over here; and information on the maximum allowable concentrations of industrial air contaminants. The book is attractively produced, fulfills a very present need, and can be confidently recommended to a wider public than that for which it was intended.

J. N. A.