BOOK REVIEWS

PSYCHOLOGY, THE FUNDAMENTALS OF HUMAN ADJUSTMENT
By Norman L. Munn

Dr. Munn is a lecturer in Psychology in Tennessee. He has written a book indicating the foundations of the lectures which he gives, and a remarkably full book it is, ranging from Plato to Rorschach. It moves through the problems of feeling, emotion, cognition, and achievement to those of intelligence and personality. The emphasis is throughout upon the experimental method of the psychological laboratory, and diagrams and figures are abundant. Every chapter is followed by a bibliography.

The material presented is considerable, but it is all "potted." The small reproduction of Healy's picture-completion test in Fig. 203 seems valueless as it stands, and similar criticisms could be levelled at many other figures. Where Dr. Munn is discussing introversion and extroversion he again inserts a figure which is interesting, but he does not in the text really tackle the problems involved. This is typical of the information given: it is true up to a point, but it is doubtful if any student could rely satisfactorily upon learning any useful psychology from this volume alone. The mischief is that many students would consider that they could. We have no doubt that Dr. Munn knows these dangers better than the reviewer. This book reminds us of those medical primers "Aids to..." which are so compressed that at times they give information which could be falsely interpreted.

So long as Dr. Munn's book is recognized as an attempt to abbreviate an enormous subject and to stimulate further reading, well and good. But its danger lies in its being accepted too glibly as authoritative per se, and the simplicity of some of its diagrams illustrates these dangers only too well. As a form of suggestive notes to the teacher of psychology already well versed in the subject it has something useful to offer.

H.W.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF DISEASE
By John A. Ryle

The appearance of a second edition of this readable collection of essays and papers will be warmly welcomed. The work will be remembered as a well-balanced combination of wisdom, historical information, and clinical observation, record, and analysis, written somewhat in the style of the physicians of a generation ago. It is, however, more than this because it links up with the future trend of developments in social medicine by references to the value of investigation of the natural history of disease not only in the individual patient, but also in the family, which is the smallest social unit, and so to larger populations in the community. In this light a new chapter on the social pathology of rheumatic fever has been introduced, in which the author supports voluntary notification, emphasizing the value this would have upon epidemiological and aetiological studies, the basis of further developments in preventive action. He remarks, however, on the modern tendency of doctors to become so interested in local pathologies that they forget the minds of their patients, and that anxiety is one of the most frequently encountered symptoms in practice and demands reassurance from the doctor. The drift towards prevalent neurosis in the community he attributes to our generation becoming too disease conscious. "It is possible to legislate too much for safety and for health, or, rather for a state of no disease which is not really health," he writes.

There are two further new chapters on nosophobia and prognosis. Wider use of statistical analysis is urged, implying the follow-up method, so that the physician can develop the important facility for accurate prognosis. The author makes no excuse for retaining his chapter on lobar pneumonia and explains that, although chemotherapy has greatly altered treatment, the lessons to be learned about judgment in prognosis cannot better be exemplified than by a study of the natural history of this disease. "Full notes, frequently perused, are the essence of clinical deduction." One feels that this is the text of the author's thesis throughout the book. A detailed history will time and again prove its value in the analysis of the meaning of symptoms. Medical students should read, and qualified doctors of all grades re-read this likeable book.

J.L.L.

PRINCIPLES OF MEDICAL STATISTICS
By A. Bradford Hill

In view of the present dearth of textbooks, the reissue of Professor Bradford Hill's Principles of Medical Statistics is particularly welcome. It has already become a standard work, and the new sections included in the latest edition should greatly enhance its value. The book provides an excellent introduction to simple statistical methods of experimentation and analysis and, although the illustrations are all drawn from medicine, it should prove useful to workers in other fields as well. The author assumes no previous knowledge of the subject and confines himself to what may be termed "arithmetic guided by logic." The book covers the selection and presentation of data, averages and variability, sampling and correlation, life tables and the standardization of death rates. There is also a particularly useful section on common fallacies and the misuse of statistics.