

Reviews

WAR AND SOCIAL PSYCHIATRY

The Shaping of Psychiatry by War. By John Rawlings Rees, M.D. (Pp. 158. 10s. 6d.) London: Chapman and Hall. 1945.

Brigadier Rees, as consulting psychiatrist to the British Army, has had a unique opportunity of investigating the psychiatry of the war, which he has summarized in these Salmon lectures given in America. While he has for the most part described the work of others, he has himself been the inspiration of that work, and as such has, with the whole body of psychiatrists, Service and lay, changed the "shape" of psychiatry. The main problem of modern psychiatry is concerned not with the psychoses but with the numerous personality problems which, in certain adverse situations of work and of social environment, lead to the psychoneuroses and behaviour disorders. Methods of analytic treatment are necessarily prolonged and can, therefore, deal with only a small proportion of those who need such treatment. An effort must therefore be made to prevent even those who are predisposed from breaking down. This is the aim of social psychiatry, and the principles and means of coping with this problem in the Army have here been described. It opens up vast possibilities for civilian life in the future.

The "priorities" in social psychiatry are: first, methods of selecting the right man for the right job; secondly, prophylaxis by better training and "man management"; thirdly, morale; and, finally, treatment. The first three are fully dealt with and their methods described.

Selection.—Some points make very interesting reading; for instance, when all candidates are examined by the psychiatrist they welcome it, whereas if some only are selected for examination this implies that they are peculiar, and they dislike it. Brigadier Rees considers that the chief credential of a good psychiatrist is the personality qualification. The importance of personality qualifications is indicated in the fact that a much shorter course is required to make a good psychiatrist provided he is of the right personality. This applies also to the selection of officers: "It was early realized that in selecting men for commissioned rank the personality factor was the major consideration, provided that the candidate had adequate intelligence" (p. 72). But is personality a "factor"? Is it not the sum total of factors, of which intelligence is one? One nevertheless has an uncomfortable feeling that in assessing personality we are assessing something the nature of which is not understood or defined. For selection, the tendency has been away from laboratory tests to tests calling forth the whole personality, such as putting the officer into a difficult test situation with a number of his fellows without any instructions.

Prophylaxis.—While the author rightly stresses that those with analytic experience are the best capable of designing methods and carrying out these procedures, it is not perhaps sufficiently stressed that only by the radical investigation and treatment of the individual can the predisposing causes be rightly assessed and the prophylaxis become really effective. Without this, social psychiatry will become a superficial study and make blunders. The medical officer, says the author, has to think in terms of groups rather than of individual patients. This is true for prophylaxis, but it is not exclusively true of treatment; and it is to be questioned why the individual casualty suffering from a war neurosis should not receive the same care, say, as an orthopaedic patient, who sometimes takes months to recover.

Morale.—To many this will be the most interesting part of the work: for instance, the observations on the danger of discipline without morale. "The three main factors which make for good morale in wartime are: adequate war aim and purpose, a sense of one's competence and value, and the feeling that one matters as an individual in a group of other similar people" (p. 84). Some of these investigations confirm earlier opinions, but others gave unexpected results, such as that women (A.T.S.) in mixed batteries complained more of fear of sterility than of sex (possibly because fear inhibits sex), and that sexual disorders arose out of loneliness rather than excess of sex feeling. A hint from child psychology was found to apply also to Army recruits (p. 79)—namely, that it is best to let a recruit use his weapon first and then learn to look after it,

otherwise he loses the enthusiasm with which he started and becomes bored. Some of us wondered at the beginning of the war whether a war could be successfully fought without hate. An interesting observation regarding morale is, therefore, that the original attempt to inculcate hate of the enemy was ineffective and led to depression; also that too much realism at first encouraged anxiety. The recruit had to be inoculated into realism. The importance of morale in war has always been recognized, but never so much as in this war. On page 95 Brigadier Rees states: "Wars are won, not by killing one's opponents, but by undermining their morale." But some of us may still believe that killing them is the most effective way of undermining their morale.

In the chapter "The Way Ahead" Brigadier Rees points out the application of the findings in war psychiatry to social psychiatry in civil life. These are but some samples of the large number of interesting subjects dealt with. Altogether it is a book that everyone interested in psychiatry, and in social and industrial medicine, should read. It gives a new orientation to the practice of psychiatry, and Brigadier Rees deserves the thanks of the profession for so lucid and interesting an introduction to the subject.

HISTORY OF ANAESTHESIA

The History of Surgical Anesthesia. By Thomas E. Keys. With an introductory essay by Chauncey D. Leake, and a concluding chapter by Noel A. Gillespie. (Pp. 191; illustrated. \$6.00.) New York: Schuman's.

The serious study of the origins and development of a specialty augurs well for that specialty. Sturdy and well-cared-for roots can but ensure a healthy and productive tree. So far as anaesthesia is concerned an accurate and scholarly account of its history has been long overdue. The earlier appearance of such a history might have prevented both the duplication of invention and the undeserved praise for the supposed originality of the inventors.

Major Keys has obviously put enthusiasm and energy into his task and has managed to pack a remarkable amount of information into small compass. No anaesthetist will read this book without pride, nor surgeons without wonder that so much has been accomplished in the field of anaesthesia in so short a time. The emphasis on American achievement is a little heavy, and British anaesthetists may feel that the very noteworthy contribution of this country to the development of inhalation anaesthesia in the 19th century is treated rather cursorily. One of the many lessons to be learnt from reading this book is that progress in anaesthesia is not to be made by a new knob here or an altered tap there. Such stories as that of divinyl ether, told by Chauncey Leake in the introductory essay, are examples to inspire those who would make real contributions to the subject.

Major Keys has made his material not only readable but enjoyable both to the medical and to the interested lay reader. For the anaesthetist, however, the book cannot be regarded as the last word on the subject. There are only some 90 pages of text, the other half of the book consisting of a chronology, lists of references, and an index. Included, also, is a short and excellent essay by Dr. Gillespie on the future of anaesthesia. Inevitably, therefore, much has had to be omitted. Thus no reference is made to Cattlin, whose revolutionary introduction, in 1868, of a reservoir bag, now frequently misnamed a re-breathing bag, made it possible to dispense with the cumbersome gasometer. Clover, an illustrious pioneer in this country, receives but five lines in the text, in none of which are even mentioned his more important contributions, such as the, to us, familiar ether inhaler and the very ingenious and accurate apparatus for the production and administration of known percentages of chloroform. They receive a bare mention in the chronology. Some of the sources might not satisfy the academic, who would dispute the superiority of an encyclopaedia over an author's own works as to what the author did or did not say.

Most of the illustrations are portraits, and but few are instructive or help to clarify the text. They provide, however, a fine picture gallery of Americans, past and present, whose names are respected in anaesthesia. Queen Victoria finds herself in strange company. Her patronage of and submission to anaesthesia *à la reine* seem little qualification for inclusion of her portrait here.