

### Book Reviews

unique three volume *Atlas of Mahfouz's Obstetric and Gynaecological Museum* which extended to 1,276 pages and had 713 illustrations, many of them coloured. The numbers and the rarity of many of the specimens brought home to working gynaecologists that the author has had unique experience in obstetrics and gynaecology.

Professor Mahfouz has seen the renaissance of the School of Medicine in Cairo. He ascribes this to a combination of factors including the change in language for tuition from Arabic to English and the infusion of new blood in the teaching staff. He himself has made a world wide reputation as the pioneer of both obstetrics and gynaecology in the Egypt of today. He has written his autobiography as a series of self-contained chapters each describing interesting events, some of them personal and domestic, and others of quite historical importance. His style is simple narrative which is pleasant to read and suitable as a bedside book, particularly for the layman. Most gynaecologists will want to read it and a much wider public will enjoy it too. Co-incidentally it is a work of considerable value in medical history, describing how the department of obstetrics and gynaecology of the medical school of Cairo came into being, a first-hand account from one who was present throughout the period.

ALISTAIR GUNN

*The Nature of Hypnosis: selected basic readings*, edited by R. E. SHOR and M. T. ORNE, London, Holt, Rinehart & Wilson, 1965, pp. vii, 504, front., 88s.

The history of hypnosis is of enormous relevance to the history of psychiatry. To trace out the story of hypnotic studies during the last 200 years means coming close to the centre of most of the important arguments which have shaped modern psychiatry. Mesmerism was the narrow watershed between the occult and the scientific study of mind. The debate between Bernheim and Charcot was an acting out of the conflict between animists and somaticists. If Anna O had not so conveniently gone into her spontaneous evening trances we should have heard less of Breuer or Freud. Hull's writing on hypnosis gives a vivid instance of behaviourism as a revolutionary creed. The division between Pavlovian and Freudian theories on hypnosis is one of the great schisms. And the growth of psychosomatic medicine may owe much to the nineteenth century demonstrations of hypnotic influence on somatic function.

Shor and Orne have put together in this volume 34 papers from a vast literature, and for anyone with a specialist interest in hypnosis such a book serves no purpose. For the non-specialist however the editor's balanced and intelligent choosings provide an excellent survey of the subject. The eight papers in the historical section include Mesmer's letter to the Royal College of Physicians, an agreeable extract from Deleuze on rules of magnetizing and Ernest Hart's description of the hypno-therapeutic department of La Charité under Dr. Luys. There is an historical bibliography which, though incomplete, is useful.

The editors show too that the study of hypnosis is still throwing up questions. In particular, the contribution of 'role-playing' to hypnotic behaviour must challenge our thinking on the influence of social control on the content of neurotic illness. Shor and Orne not only titillate the historian's interest—Greatraks, Elliotson, Esdaile, Braid, Gurney have none of them received sufficient scholarly attention—but show up the shortcomings of any contemporary theory when put to the task of explaining hypnosis.