

Book Reviews

Public Health in Glasgow, 1905–1946, by ALEXANDER MACGREGOR, Edinburgh and London, E. & S. Livingstone, 1967, pp. xi, 175, illus., 25s. 0d.

The lifetime of professional work which Sir Alexander Macgregor spent in Glasgow saw the transformation of the city from a major centre of disease and death to a place nearly 'as healthy as the country', in the prophetic words of Dr. James Russell, an earlier Medical Officer of Health of the city. Sir Alexander's account of the growth of public health services during the first half of the century within a local government framework epitomises British public health history in general; and it illustrates well the special attributes of local government to bring about development and change with the support and encouragement of the people and also its capacity for enlightened experimentation in the fields of environmental and personal hygiene. The account is enlivened by personal anecdote. It deals in detail with the epidemic and endemic infections—smallpox, plague, typhus, typhoid, erisypelas, cerebrospinal fever—particularly before the First World War; with housing and other environmental problems; with the development of personal health services and their co-ordination under local government after the Local Government Act of 1929; and it ends with the period of the Second World War. It is a valuable addition to local public health history.

FRASER BROCKINGTON

Neuropsychiatry in World War II: Vol. I—Zone of Interior, ed. by R. S. ANDERSON, A. J. GLASS, and R. J. BERNUCCI, Washington, D.C., Department of the Army, 1966, pp. xxxiv, 898, illus., \$7.50.

This large, weighty volume brings neuropsychiatry into the official history of the Medical Department of the United States Army in World War II which is being prepared by the Historical Unit of the United States Army Medical Service. Over 800 pages in length, the book includes six appendices, sixty-five illustrations, sixteen charts and sixty-seven tables. It is hard to believe that all the contents are indispensable to a work of this type: Figure 27, for example, which is entitled 'A neuropsychiatric attendant bringing a tray of food to a mental patient in a paranoid state. Patient believes the food to be poisoned. (Posed by professional actors)'.

Nonetheless, the reader will be rewarded by perseverance. The origins of the post-war boom in American psychiatry, which has had repercussions all over the world, can be traced to the development of the subject in wartime conditions. The demands of the military community made it a matter of urgent necessity to give serious consideration to the prevalence of psychiatric disability in young adult life and the various means available to cope with it. The most important lesson learnt from this experience is clearly stated on the last pages of the book: ' . . . the subtle or gradual orientation of psychiatry as a result of wartime experience toward considering the emotional problems of the individual within the context of his group and his social culture, instead of almost exclusive preoccupation with intrapsychic conflict or pathology'. The application of this principle to the community at large in peacetime has found ample expression in what is now widely recognized as social psychiatry in the developing as well as the developed countries.

MICHAEL SHEPHERD