

quite comparable to the diseases discussed, shows periods of epidemic prevalence, tend in one respect to support the author's hypothesis, for it has been shown that the parasitic factor, the diphtheria bacillus, exhibits a remarkable degree of constancy as regards virulence—that is to say, it presents little variation qualitatively. The studies of Sir Leonard Rogers on cholera and other diseases also support the hypothesis of the close relationship between climatic conditions and the occurrence of epidemics.

The author appears to ascribe more importance to an increase in the amount of infection relatively greater than the depression of communal immunity in the genesis of epidemics, but it does not seem clear upon what grounds. In the case of diphtheria, and also of measles, the evidence appears to us to be in favour of depression of immunity being the more important factor. These, however, are side issues, and the author would be the first to admit that he has been able to adduce few certainties. He has undoubtedly produced a work of considerable importance and a hypothesis which deserves the careful consideration of epidemiologists.

R. T. H.

### Progress in Psychiatry.

*Recent Advances in Psychiatry.* By Dr. Henry Devine. (The Recent Advances Series.) Pp. x + 340. (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1929.) 12s. 6d.

**D**URING the post-War years, and more particularly since the Royal Commission on Lunacy completed and published its labours, the subject of mental disorder has been one of universal public interest. Dr. Henry Devine, the superintendent of the Holloway Sanatorium, was entrusted with the work of writing the volume in Messrs. Churchill's well-known "Recent Advances" series dealing with this subject.

Dr. Devine has carried out what proved to be a very difficult task with extraordinary thoroughness, and is to be congratulated on a very fine piece of work. Anyone conversant with the extent of the field in mental disorder and its cognate subjects will marvel at the success which has crowned the author's effort to cover as much of the ground as possible. He is careful to emphasise what is perhaps one of the most important attitudes towards mental disorder, namely, that no single etiological factor, in practically all instances, is sufficient to account for the disease. In all cases there are at work closely inter-related mental and physical causes—mental stress, acute or chronic, on one hand,

and heredity, focal infection, organic disease and disorder of the internal secretions, on the other.

After a well-balanced discussion of the basis of psychiatry, the author divides the rest of his book into five parts. The first part deals with toxic, infective, and somatic factors in the causation of mental disorders. In this section he discusses the very important subject of the effect of toxic agents on the germ plasm, and concludes that there is a very close relationship between hereditary disease and a psychopathic predisposition. At the same time, he is careful to emphasise the very great importance of focal infections in all parts of the body as causative agents. The important fact is that in the majority of cases these infections are not discovered except by highly skilled biochemical and bacteriological work. This point cannot be emphasised too strongly. Physical examination of a patient by the family doctor is quite insufficient; it is work for highly skilled research workers, of which there are far too few in Great Britain.

In the second part, Dr. Devine discusses the development of what is commonly known as protein shock treatment and other similar forms of treatment, leading up finally to the now almost universal treatment of that most fatal of maladies, general paralysis of the insane, by benign tertian malaria. The author gives a well-balanced account of this most interesting department of therapeutics. In the third part, he discusses the various biochemical and physiological aberrations which are to be found in mental disorders. Perhaps the most important subject in this section is the work of Golla on the physiological investigation of pleasure and pain and of the neuroses. In the fourth part, he discusses what is one of the most recent and most interesting developments of modern psychiatry—the influence of physical and psychological types.

In the fifth and last part, the author deals with the purely mental aspects of mental disorder in a reasonable and impartial manner. Into this section he brings the important work of Pavlov on conditioned reflexes. The chapter entitled "The Morbid Mind" is the best chapter in the whole book, and one from which every morbid and every normal mind would gain great benefit by reading. Dr. Devine wisely points out that psychotherapy is of very limited use in the treatment of the insane, except in the direction of occupational therapy and the attitude of the mental nurse, which are really indirect or environmental forms of psychotherapy.

This book will remain a standard record of progress in a branch of medicine which is all too frequently adversely criticised by the public.