

The author writes with the remarkable clarity and scientific accuracy which we associate with the best French men of science; but he is no slave to orthodoxy. Whilst the facts are accurate, the interpretation of function shows a bias towards the less generally accepted theories. Thus, owing to the acknowledged difficulties of the morphological discrimination of rods and cones, he is inclined to undervalue the physiological arguments in favour of the duplicity theory, which, indeed, receive less attention than they deserve. He rejects Helmholtz's theory of accommodation in favour of that of Tscherning, and also both the Young-Helmholtz and the Hering theories for one of piezo-electric resonance of his own.

These peculiarities do not detract from the value of the book, especially for those already *au fait* with the subject; and its value is further enhanced by interesting applications of the facts to art and architecture. Thus he points out that oddities of drawing, such as those of El Greco—and it has also been said of Sargent—cannot be attributed, as has been done, to astigmatism of the painter's eyes. On the other hand he goes so far as to state that Vermeer's "View of Delft" shows characteristics which prove that the artist was myopic. These and other suggestions of a similar nature add greatly to the fascination of the book, reminding one of Shelford Bidwell's "Curiosities of Light and Sight".

### PHYSIOLOGY

#### Sex and Internal Secretions

A Survey of Recent Research. Editor: Edgar Allen. Pp. xxxvi+1346. (London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, 1939.) 54s.

THIS well-known book is sponsored by the Committee for Research in Problems of Sex of the National Research Council of America. The first edition, published in 1932 to celebrate the completion of ten years work by the committee, soon established itself as a standard work of reference; the second edition is much larger than the first. It contains twenty-four chapters by different authors, most of whose names are known as the leading authorities in the fields with which they deal, and most of whom contributed to the first edition, though several new names have been added including that of an Englishman—W. H. Newton.

The field covered by this book is so wide that few people could properly appreciate all the different sections, which cover the genetic basis and embryonic development of sex, abnormalities of sex, the biology and chemistry of the testes and ovaries, the behaviour of spermatozoa, gonadotropic substances, the lactogenic hormone, the relation of vitamins to sex, and sex drive. There is a chapter on sex functions in man written from the clinical point of view, which deals not only with disorders of the sex organs, but also with the relation of sex to disorders in other parts of the body such as anæmia, hæmophilia and skin disease. There is a section on the biological assay of androgens and œstrogens which directs attention to the many sources of error in such assays, but which fails to emphasize the large chance

errors associated with assays on small groups of animals, or to indicate the methods by which they can be reduced. The book will be invaluable to all serious students of the physiology of sex, but will not interest the dilettante.

#### Hearing and Equilibrium

By H. Macnaughton-Jones. Pp. viii+128+15 plates. (London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, 1939.) 7s. 6d.

THE author has some original ideas on the working of the middle and inner ears, which he has illustrated by means of mechanical models. The book contains no account of recent work on the ear by other investigators, which is regrettable. It is difficult for the reader to solve for himself the problems which arise from an attempt to correlate the hypotheses put forward with the electrical effects which have been observed to occur when the ear is stimulated by sound.

### PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

#### The Nature of Creative Activity

Experimental and Comparative Studies of Visual and Non-Visual Sources of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture by means of the Artistic Products of Weak-Sighted and Blind Subjects and of the Art of Different Epochs and Cultures. By Viktor Löwenfeld. Translated from the German by O. A. Oeser. Pp. xvii+272. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1939.) 21s. net.

THIS most interesting book is a study in the investigation of the creative activity of poor-sighted and blind subjects combined with a comparative study of the art of different cultures. The first section of the book is devoted to the study of children's drawings, the second to those of the weak-sighted, the third to a generalized study. There are more than a hundred pages of illustrations of children's drawings, together with a selection of drawings from weak-sighted individuals and various representations of historical types of art. The artistic creations of the blind and weak-sighted are largely based on the sense of touch and other senses.

#### Psycho-Analysis

By Dr. Edward Glover. Pp. viii+139. (London: John Bale Medical Publications, Ltd., 1939.) 12s. 6d. net.

THIS small book, which is dedicated to the memory of Sigmund Freud, attempts to give in one hundred and thirty-three pages the theory and practice of psycho-analysis. It can be said at once that the author has succeeded very well. The book is divided into two parts, the first dealing with theory, the second with the application of the theory to clinical practice. The author's statement that the psycho-analyst's interest lies in the early recognition and prevention of psychotic breakdown may be very praiseworthy, but we wonder how many cases of psychoses have been prevented by psycho-analysis and how many precipitated thereby. It is a good little book and worth reading.