importance of these drugs in treating bacterial infections, such as septicæmia, pneumonia, meningitis and gonorrhœa is graphically presented. In this chapter the author occasionally departs from factual statements and introduces opinions which are highly controversial. It is extremely doubtful, for example, whether Dr. Taylor is justified in speaking for all members of enlightened communities when he writes ". . . there is no community which does not despise the (sexually) impotent with a contempt which the victim himself shares". It is to be hoped that there has been some change of outlook in the 270 years that have elapsed since Mr. Wycherley made a butt of a sexually impotent man in his play, "The Country Wife". A further matter for regret is that some grave moral and social issues are dismissed in a flippant manner.

In other chapters are discussed the steroid compounds and their physiological effects upon human beings, as well as recent investigations in protein chemistry and physics, including an account of the action of intracellular proteinases.

"The War Against Cancer" consists mainly of a description of Kögl's method for investigating stereoisomeric proteins inside the cell. The insulin shock treatment for schizophrenia is adequately described, while in a further chapter is an account of the Bergius, Fischer-Tropsch and other processes for making oil from coal. The chapter on television is involved and confusing, and would offer considerable difficulty to non-specialists in this field. Among other topics discussed are the quartz clock, helium II, present-day atomic hypotheses, the aurora, and finally, an account is given of modern ideas in astronomical science, this being partly devoted to R. A. Lyttelton's binary star hypothesis of planet origin and partly to interpretations about the composition and distribution of bodies in space.

By his industry in collecting material; and his assiduousness in collating it, Dr. Sherwood Taylor has made a substantial contribution to extending the range of science. On its merits his book deserves a wide circle of readers.

T. H. HAWKINS.

MENTAL TESTS

The Measurement of Abilities

By Dr. Philip E. Vernon. Pp. xii + 308. (London: University of London Press, Ltd., 1940.) 10s. 6d. net.

IN the past five years or so, the work of the International Institute Examinations Enquiry in Great Britain and elsewhere has, to some extent, awakened the public to the need for some radical revision of the examination system. Those who are alive to this social need will welcome Dr. Vernon's book, for it provides for teachers, school medical officers and students of education generally an up-to-date survey of simple methods which can readily be applied to this end.

Under present evacuation conditions, the necessity for just and accurate methods of assessing the abilities and attainments of school-children is particularly urgent. Large numbers of children will have missed many months of their normal education or will have had their normal course of development hindered or diverted. The discrepancies between ability and achievement will probably become more irregularly distributed in the school population. The book under review gives the teacher, headmaster and school examining bodies a means of overcoming these difficulties.

About half of Dr. Vernon's book is devoted to elementary statistical techniques applicable in

educational work. The author's aim is wholly practical, so considerations appropriate to statistical theory are omitted. A wealth of illustration is provided of almost every type of problem in evaluating ability or achievement that might arise in school or clinic. The remainder of the book is mainly a critical account of mental tests and examinations, especially of the new type. The sections on construction and improvements of new-type examinations are particularly useful.

The author admits that contemporary psychological and educational research, unfortunately, makes far too much use of correlational techniques, while neglecting such valuable methods as the analysis of variance. In spite of this, we find about fifty pages devoted to the former and a brief single page, conveying little, to the latter.

The statement (p. 161) that most ways of factorizing tests "will lead to quite illogical results" must be questioned. If different results are obtained from different methods of factorial analysis, this is because these methods have different objectives and consequently vary in procedure as, for example, in estimating the diagonal cells in a correlation table. The final results of different methods may not be comparable, but they can scarcely be called "illogical".

J. I. COHEN.