

sufficiently accurate. On pp. 362-65 a sight is worked by them and also by other similar tables for purposes of comparison. To judge by the number of figures used, Lieut.-Commander Weems's "Tables" and Hughes's "Sea and Air Navigation Tables", which appear to be identical, win in a dead heat.

The star altitude curves, referred to in the first paragraph of this note, are curves of equal altitude

of certain selected stars, numbered to allow for refraction and plotted on a Mercator's chart. Their object is to provide a very quick means of obtaining a complete fix. The directions for use are explicit enough and that use is not limited to the selected stars. The explanation of their why and wherefore would puzzle a beginner. We have not tried them out.

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## PSYCHOLOGY FOR STUDENTS

### A Biological Introduction to Psychology

An Introduction to Psychology for Students and Practitioners of Medicine. By Prof. R. J. S. McDowall. Pp. xiv+210. (London: John Murray, 1941.) 6s. net.

THERE are innumerable introductions to psychology, but few claim the distinction of being "biological" introductions. One therefore turned to this book, which was written by the professor of physiology at King's College, in the expectation that it would be something unusual. It might have been expected, for example, that it would have been written on evolutionary lines or along the developmental levels of the nervous system, since biology is mainly a study of increasing complexity in animal life. It might have progressed from the simple reflex to the greater complication of chained reflexes and thence to the instinct, the control of instinctual urges and the emergence of consciousness, the properties of memory, forgetting, and finally with the abnormalities associated with deranged function, so as to make a coherent whole.

Unfortunately, Prof. McDowall has not chosen a biological plan but has made an effort to make his book all-inclusive and so introduced unnecessary complication. He commences with a short section on adaptation. He then considers conscious activity, but follows this with processes of the nervous system. He proceeds to life's motives and the instincts. This section on the instincts includes the security instinct, the sex instinct, the power urge, and the spiritual urge. (It will be seen from this that Prof. McDowall does not adhere to the usual conception of the instincts, but adopts Adlerian theories and, in the spiritual urge, views which would be unacceptable to a large number of psychologists.) The last section of the book includes personality, reasoning, suggestion and hypnosis, dreams, the effects of mental states on bodily reactions, and the evolution of the individual.

There are a certain number of mistakes which are regrettable. For example, on p. 48, the author says "These phobias, or 'fixations' as they are sometimes called," and again on p. 49 he states "Many (i.e. phobias) are so deep, so fixed and so difficult to eradicate that in psychological parlance they are known as 'fixations.'" Such statements seem to show that Prof. McDowall does not appreciate that a fixation is a special term concerning emotional development in relation to the causation of neurosis or psychosis.

It would be unfair to condemn this book for such mistakes. It is a reasonably good introduction for the student as long as he is prepared to find it merely an introduction to psychology without having any special merit by being "biological". Moreover, it will please many by being essentially of the common-sense type, avoiding undue adherence to any particular school of psychological thought and making any assertions which need other than a superficial knowledge of psychology to appreciate. The style of the book is pleasant and friendly, and obviously inclined to lead the student gradually on from section to section.

There is a short appendix, which contains a number of case notes taken from Ross's "The Common Neuroses", Henderson and Gillespie's "Text-book of Psychiatry" and Howe's "Motives and Mechanisms of the Mind", etc. It is a merit of the book that it is not padded out with case notes, and those who write psychological books are well advised to follow Prof. McDowall's plan of placing case notes in a separate section so that they can be read apart from the text. The index is good and quite sufficient for a book of this kind. It would have been a good plan if a wide bibliography had been added, however, since an introduction of this kind should lead the student on to wider and more comprehensive reading. This would allow him to fill in the superficialities inevitable in an introduction and to correct the mistakes which have slipped into the text.