

work on the first appearance of specific weeds in different areas might well throw light on the migration of different culture groups. Like King Alfred and the cakes, those who in prehistoric time were given the task of heating grain to prevent its germination during storage sometimes neglected their task, so that the mass of grain became charred and had to be jettisoned. Study of samples of such charred grain often reveals surprising differences. Sometimes the samples are full of many different weed seeds, sometimes they are remarkably clean. Different agricultural practices must lie behind such differences.

Professor Dimbleby deserves our thanks for a stimulating book.  
G. F. MITCHELL

## PSYCHIATRIC SUMMING UP

### The State of Psychiatry

Essays and Addresses. By Aubrey Lewis. Pp. ix + 310. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1967.) 63s. net.

### Inquiries in Psychiatry

Clinical and Social Investigations. By Aubrey Lewis. Pp. vii + 335. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1967.) 63s. net.

IN these two volumes, published at the insistence of his present and former pupils, Sir Aubrey Lewis has collated the pick of his contributions to the literature of psychiatry during the past forty years. For once, the term "literature" is not inappropriate: in many of these papers, the writer shows a turn of phrase and a relish for the unfamiliar yet precise word calculated to excite the envy of a Vladimir Nabokov. This aesthetic element is apparent not only in the first volume, sub-titled "Essays and Addresses", but also in the second where it informs the writer's imaginative insight into the phenomena of mental illness—as in the earliest paper, which deals with "The experience of time in mental disorder". This penetrating clinical report has an added significance today because distortion of the sense of time is one of the striking characteristics of intoxication with cannabis or LSD.

The major work in the second volume is undoubtedly Sir Aubrey's massive clinical and prognostic study of depressive states, a study which led him to conclude that the customary practice of categorizing depression as either "endogenous" or "reactive" was an erroneous oversimplification. Curiously enough, more than thirty years after the publication of these papers, the illusory dichotomy still holds the field, although empirical studies designed to test its validity have shown conflicting results. When one re-reads Sir Aubrey's classic paper, one finds that although he suggests that the term "reactive depression" should be done away with (volume 2, page 112) he follows this almost immediately by the suggestion that in each case an assessment should be made of the degree to which reactive processes or endogenous factors enter into the illness. This suggestion, in turn, is not advanced directly but only by endorsing the words of a German neuro-psychiatrist. Here, and again in the two papers on obsessional illness, we encounter the paradox of Sir Aubrey's clinical teaching: he shows a keen perception of the subtleties of the phenomena, but is so conscious of the limitations of present knowledge that he finds it almost impossible to commit himself to a firm theoretical formulation.

This acute awareness of the complexity of psychophysiological phenomena and of the paucity of definite knowledge about their underlying processes was what characterized his teaching. One might say that he specialized in making trainee psychiatrists realize how little they knew: but he also demonstrated, in his own work and in his discussions of current research, how this great continent of ignorance could be explored, surveyed, measured and conquered piecemeal.

His first volume contains three concise and concen-

trated articles summing up his views on the teaching of psychiatry, and also a number of papers addressed to a wider audience. Here, his two major interests are apparent: first, the history of ideas about mental disorder and the relationship of these ideas to the contemporary social and intellectual climate in earlier periods: and second, his tireless concern to promote a spirit of true scientific empirical verification in contemporary psychiatric research. If such research has a keener cutting edge today than forty years ago—as few would question—this is because its tools have been honed by the whetstone of Sir Aubrey's intellect.  
G. M. CARSTAIRS

## OBITUARIES

### Dr Ann Horton

ANN CATHERINE HORTON (née Davies), who died in Cambridge on July 15, was the first woman to be appointed to the lecturing staff of the Cavendish Laboratory. She was born in London in April 1894, the daughter of Robert Davies, merchant tailor, and studied physics at Royal Holloway College where she took her B.Sc. in 1915 and her D.Sc. in 1922. Most of her published work, comprising about twenty-five papers in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society* and elsewhere appearing between 1919 and 1936, were carried out at the College in co-operation with Professor F. Horton, whom she married in 1939. The most important of these papers were concerned with radiation from and ionization potentials of the rare gases; the work emphasized the importance of a high degree of purity in gases under study, and in the years following Bohr's theory of stationary states contributed to its full verification. Her last paper "The Production of Radiation and Ionization from Helium Atoms by Potassium Positive Ions" reports work which she carried out in the Cavendish Laboratory, published by the Royal Society in 1936.

After holding a position as staff lecturer at Holloway College, Miss Davies was appointed fellow and lecturer in physics at Newnham College, Cambridge, a position she held until 1957; she was vice-principal of the college from 1936 to 1946. From 1935 until 1961 she was a university lecturer in physics and continued demonstrating to Part I classes until a few months before her death. She had many outside activities. For instance, she was a member of the Trustees of Homerton College, Cambridge, and in this capacity was particularly interested in the problems a training college has in producing good science teachers with an experimental approach to their subject. She was a member of the Council of New Hall and at a time when several groups in Cambridge had been working to secure more places for women students in the university she played a great part in formulating the practical policy, and her moderation, good sense and willingness to listen played an important part in the foundation of the college in 1954.

When her main interests had moved from original research to teaching and planning, she never lost her independent approach to the sort of problems which always arise in an active laboratory. When an experiment in the practical class gave unexpected results, or when students wanted to know something more than the working manuscript had told them, she was always ready to explore it with them, whether it concerned an unevenly loaded strip, a zone plate with badly drawn zones or a radioactive source with unexpected lifetimes. Her wide experience, her readiness to tackle difficulties and her patience in giving help where help was needed were of value not only to successive generations of students but also to her academic colleagues and the assistant staff. It would be fair to say that the unassuming way in which she took her place and her full part in a laboratory which had not previously had women lecturers made it easier for those who came after her.