

allied subjects, as we are assured in the prefaces of the books on these subjects, which arrive by almost every mail from Europe, that they are written at the urgent request of some society or to fill 'a long-felt want' of a certain class of reader. We are looking forward to the day when a writer claims, we will not say admits, that she (ninety-five per cent of the writers are women) is writing a book with the object of selling as many copies as possible and making a handsome profit. We do not pretend that medical literature is not richer than it was twenty years ago, by the addition of this type of book, as now at least the medical man does not have to go to the pornographical bookshop to gain the knowledge on sex matters that is necessary to him if he is to advise his patients properly. (The cynic will perhaps say that this is because the pornographical bookshop has invaded the medical library.) But we cannot help thinking that there is much unnecessary duplication, and we feel that it is our duty to select from the pile of books that are sent to us for review only those that, in our opinion, fulfil a special function and fulfil it well.

Each of the three books under review is written for a special class of reader. The first is a record of scientific investigation into the mode of action and the relative efficacy of various drugs and appliances used to prevent conception; it is written for the 'specialist' in birth control, whether he or she be a member of the medical profession or a social worker. For the sake of the latter group of reader many explanatory details, which would be unnecessary for medical readers or non-medical scientists, are given. The investigations reported were undertaken under the auspices of the National Committee of Maternal Health, New York, but the work was carried out in collaboration with Professor Crew of the Animal Breeding Research Department, University of Edinburgh. The book is a valuable contribution to the subject.

Dr. Gladys Cox's book is essentially a medical book, written for medical men and women. No space is given to discussions on the ethics of birth control, though there is a section on its medical indications. After an introductory chapter and a second on the physiology of conception, the author gets down to her subject, and describes and discusses different methods of contraception, as one would different forms of treatment in an ordinary medical book, giving a number of methods with their advantages and disadvantages, their special indications and contra-indications. There is a final chapter on birth control clinics and the position of birth control in the public health services.

Dr. Hutton's book is written for the direct instruction of the public. It is a book that the doctor can confidently recommend to his patients. The subject of the sex relationship of man and woman is discussed openly but entirely inoffensively. There are chapters dealing with birth control, but the subject is not overstressed. We have reviewed earlier editions of this book and we are glad to see that it has now reached its fourth; it is undoubtedly one of the best of its kind.

**THE LAST OF THE TABOOS, MENTAL DISORDERS IN MODERN LIFE.**—By I. E. Hutton, M.D. William Heinemann (Medical Books) Ltd., London. Pp. 204. Price, 6s.

'This book will be of absorbing interest to the general public as well as to social workers, and to those concerned, professionally and otherwise, with the care and treatment of the insane'. So say the publishers. If the word 'should' be substituted for 'will', and 'absorbing' be deleted, the sentence would gain both in modesty and truth. However, if the attitude is taken that the end justifies the means, and if the sentence as it stands increases the sales we will certainly not grudge them their little 'boost', for nobody will be the poorer for reading this book and in some unexpected places it may sow fertile seed.

The title and sub-title together give a clue to the trend of the book. The author claims that nowadays every subject is discussed freely (even the most intimate details of sex relationship, and in this field the author can certainly claim to have played her part in tearing away the veil of false modesty) with the single exception of mental disease. The average individual, especially the average woman, and the writer being a woman has probably suffered this type of confidence, is prepared to discuss in great deal her husband's bowels, or even a phthisical cousin, but maintains a rigid silence about an uncle who is in a mental asylum. The writer's contention is that she should be willing to discuss the last-named as freely as the other subjects, and in fact talk of the mental homes she herself has been in, as openly as she would her visits to Bath or Harrogate. The subject of mental disease is not a very pleasant one, neither is that of bodily disease, and, if people are prepared to discuss the latter (and they are—*ad nauseam*), they should not so studiously avoid the former subject.

The medical profession is largely to blame because they pander to these unreasonable prejudices of their patients; they refer to a condition as a 'nervous breakdown' and call in a nerve specialist, when they should really diagnose 'manic-depressive insanity' and call in a mental specialist.

Finally, the Law of the Land is arraigned. Certification is far too complicated a process. Two doctors and a magistrate have to see the patient within a prescribed period; this is often difficult to arrange, it frightens the patient, and gives a wrong impression to the relatives. It should be as easy to send a patient to a mental asylum as it is to a fever hospital; it would then not be looked upon as a serious event, and the last of the taboos would be short-lived.

L. E. N.

**AIDS TO BOTANY.**—By H. J. Bonham. 1934. Baillière, Tindall and Cox, London. Pp. viii plus 221, with 47 figures. Price, 3s. 6d.

This small book on botany is written in such a simple language that it will be found very useful to the beginner. It contains the essentials of the subject presented in a concise manner. The inclusion of the common Natural Orders of the flowering plants enhances the value of the book. The simple notes on plant ecology and variation, heredity, Mendelism and evolution will be very interesting to a novice. Although the subject-matter does not completely cover the I.A., and I.Sc. course of the Indian universities, it will be a very useful companion to the textbook.

E. G.

**THE CONJOINT FINALS.**—By G. N. Beeston, M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.). Second Edition. 1933. John Bale, Sons and Danielsson, Ltd., London. Pp. vi plus 158. Price, 6s.

The sub-title of this book, 'A reproduction of all the questions set in medicine, surgery and midwifery from 1911 to 1932 classified under the various systems and arranged in the date-order of their occurrence, together with a new section on pathology and bacteriology', is self explanatory. It will not only be found useful to students going to England to take the Conjoint Board examinations, but to teachers and examiners in this country, as a guide to their teaching and to provide suggestions for questions they are required to set in examinations in this country.

**MEDICAL ENTOMOLOGY ON CHART.**—By R. C. Acharyya, D.T.M. 1934. To be had at 12, Bipradas Street, Calcutta. Price, Rs. 2. Postage extra.

This is another example of literature perpetuating the terrible caste system of Linnæus. Within this