volume is that given by the Chairman, Sir Alexander Haddow: 'We have heard of the perils of semantics, and certain needs have become clearer—the need for clarity of expression and understanding of terms and concepts; also the great need for new evidence. We all have different views on biological philosophy; it is very easy to make models, but it is not easy to make fresh discoveries of fact.' Similarly, Professor Waddington, one of the organizers of this symposium, concluded: 'It is remarkable that at this symposium we have many wonderful experimental systems and beautiful observations, but an almost total absence of a clear intellectual framework of what it is all about.'

The volume contains 14 papers, each with a full discussion, and the record of three general discussion sessions. Of the communications, that by Georgiev (Moscow), on some aspects of the regulation of gene expression, deals with the biosynthesis of messenger RNA in the chromosomes and the question of whether histones can repress this synthesis *in vivo*; it also looks at the function of messenger RNA on the cytoplasmic polysomes. The contribution by Birnstiel (Edinburgh) deals with the homogeneity and arrangement of ribosomal cistrons within the genome, and with the techniques of annealing between apparently homologous RNA and DNA to produce RNA-DNA hybrids. The lucid paper by Paul considers how much of chromatin may be involved in the transcription of RNA from the DNA. Much evidence concerning transcription depends on the assumption that antinomycin D specifically affects this process. Yet when this was queried by Whisson none of the participants seemed prepared to defend this axiom.

The volume also contains a useful account of the work of the Wolffs on the precise nature of tissue factors which affect the growth and histology of tumours grown *in vitro*; a clear account of cytoplasmic DNA in embryology, by Brachet; the significance in differentiation of the interaction of different tissue components on the differentiating tissue, by Grobstein; some newer results on nuclear transplantation, by Gurdon; there are also valuable contributions by Ambrone, Abercrombie, and others.

J. CHAYEN

Social and Genetic Influences on Life and Death.

A Symposium held by the Eugenics Society in September 1966. Edited by The Lord Platt, and A. S. Parkes. (Pp. ix + 222; illustrated + tables. 63s.) Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd. 1967.

The first of the four sessions at the Symposium organized by the Eugenics Society dealt appropriately enough with prenatal and perinatal influences, and the last session with senescence. The two intervening sessions were devoted to somatic and psychological illness. At the first session, chromosome anomalies, Rh haemolytic disease, and foetal and infant mortality were discussed, and there was also a discussion on some social aspects of family growth. At the second and third session there

were statistical studies on trends in mortality in somatic disease and on the incidence of mental illness, and there were some more strictly clinical problems: coronary thrombosis, lung cancer, suicide, and alcoholism. A discussion on senescence in its economic, psychiatric, statistical, and genetic aspects concluded the symposium. The preponderance of medical contributors to this symposium makes this volume of particular interest to the medical reader in search of recognizable landmarks in social studies. This book is authoritative, concise, and covers a very wide field.

ARNOLD SORSBY

Pathogenesis of Nervous and Mental Diseases in Children. Edited by Ernest Harms. (Pp. 293; 12 figures + 3 tables. \$8.50.) New York: Libra Publishers. 1968.

In the United States of America, in the field of psychiatry at least, the word 'genetic' embraces aetiology of all kinds. It is not used exclusively for hereditary causation. Accepting this comprehensive American usage, this book, edited by Ernest Harms, provides coverage of the genetic background of neurological and psychological disorders in childhood. A large proportion of the book is devoted to ideas about psychodynamic and psychosocial causation, and these are unlikely to be of central interest to geneticists concerned with heredity.

Hereditary factors are discussed here and there in this book. In a good taxonomic review of the causes of neurological disorders in childhood, George Gold discusses the heredity of specific conditions. Sections that may be of more peripheral interest to the geneticist are those on somatotyping and constitutional analysis by Ashton Tenney and Nathan Kline, and by Reinhart Lempp.

This book is a symposium of essays that are likely to be of more interest and value to those working in the field of child psychiatry than those whose primary interest is genetics.

VALERIE COWIE

Comptes Rendus du 1^{er} Congrès International de Neurogénétique et Neuro-optalmologie. Albi, 27–30 mai 1965. (Pp. xiv + 396; 199 figures + 11 tables. sFr./DM 80; \$19.20; 160s.) Basle and New York: S. Karger. 1968. (Published also as Suppl. Vol. 15 (1966) of *J. Génét. hum.*)

Many of the contributions deal with chromosomal anomalies, and there is a general review of 70 pages on autosomal chromosomal anomalies in ophthalmology by François of Ghent. There are relatively few papers of strictly clinical significance and these are mostly ophthalmological. There is a useful study by de Morsier on Jean Antoine Colladon as a precursor of Mendel.

ARNOLD SORSBY