

data of social, medical, and psychiatric interest, including assessments of intelligence and personality, were obtained for each group.

Mr. Shields presents a great deal of information and his conclusions are carefully reasoned and undogmatic. Like other authors he finds that heredity is important for a wide variety of human characteristics. Yet, "to some it may come as a surprise that twins brought up together differ so much." Since nearly 100 pages are devoted to histories and descriptions, the reader is able to form his own judgment. He may be inclined to agree that, by and large, differences in early family structure and upbringing do not stand out as all-important causes of difference in later personality. But there is nevertheless a tendency for the twin from the less favourable background to be less emotionally robust than the co-twin. For work on twins to be still more rewarding better measures both of personality and of environmental variables need to be developed.

DAVID KAY.

SURGERY OF OLD PEOPLE

Geriatric Surgical Emergencies. By John E. Jesseph, M.D., M.D., and Henry N. Harkins, M.D., Ph.D. Foreword by Alfred A. Strauss, M.D., F.A.C.S. (Pp. 447+xii; illustrated. £5 15s.) London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1963.

There are books on medical specialties in plenty, but in this one it is the patient who is special while the subject, surgery, is general. The demand for books of this kind—for example, paediatric surgery, surgery of the diabetic, and so on—is growing, and certainly this volume, with its sixteen contributing authors, is an indication of the greater attention that is being paid to the medical care of a populace with a rapidly increasing proportion of older people. The authors of this book place 65 as the age beyond which the term geriatric should be applied—five years short of "man's allotted span."

A contributor must have considerable difficulty in deciding what and how much to include in such a book. After all, the procedures used in geriatric surgery and in general surgery are the same; it is in the choice and time of their application that differences may lie. The question arises whether it is necessary to describe standard operative measures. No surgeon is likely to practise geriatrics who has not had a proper training in general surgery, and so is fully competent to carry out the treatments recommended. On the whole the book meets this criticism fairly well, for it lays great emphasis on the choice of procedure to be applied to ageing patients. Nevertheless it does include matters that seem redundant—for instance, the description of a straightforward tracheostomy (p. 125), of a standard gastrostomy (p. 90), and the reduction of a paraphimosis (p. 348), all with illustrations. On the other hand, there is some excellent advice on the management of chest injuries, and of abdominal aneurysms, and on special points in the diagnosis of appendicitis in the aged. The chapter on anaesthesia in geriatrics covers the subject well, though on this side of the Atlantic we should be hesitant about the use of spinal anaesthesia for the aged, excellent though it be in adult life.

I think that the greatest change that has taken place in geriatric surgery in the past 20 to 30 years has been the recognition that older people stand up to surgery remarkably well, sometimes even better than younger age groups. This, of course, is not to deny the part played by modern advances in anaesthesia, antibiotics, biochemistry, and so on.

At the heading of the chapter on genito-urinary emergencies there is a quotation by Creevy: "The most

important thing to remember when dealing with old people is that they are people"—good! But surely this does not apply only to "old" people? I suggest the paraphrase: "The most important thing to remember when dealing with geriatric surgery is that it is ordinary surgery"—applied with special precautions.

There are a large number of good clear line-illustrations and the general format and binding of the book are of an attractively high standard.

NORMAN C. LAKE.

PROCESSES OF AGEING

Social and Psychological Aspects of Ageing. Edited by Clark Tibbitts and Wilma Donahue. Foreword by Ernest W. Burgess. (Pp. 952+xviii. £7 10s.) New York and London: Columbia University Press. 1962.

Social Welfare of the Ageing. Edited by Jerome Kaplan and Gordon J. Aldridge. (Pp. 372+xii. 64s.) New York and London: Columbia University Press. 1962.

Biological Aspects of Ageing. Edited by Nathan W. Shock. (Pp. 391+xv; illustrated. 60s.) New York and London: Columbia University Press. 1962.

Medical and Clinical Aspects of Ageing. Edited by Herman T. Blumenthal. (Pp. 690+xviii; illustrated. 86s.) New York and London: Columbia University Press. 1962.

The general title of this massive work, *Ageing Around the World*, conceals the fact that these are the four volumes in which are reproduced the papers read at the Fifth International Congress of Gerontology in San Francisco in August, 1960. All the contributions are in English; most are given in full but without the subsequent discussion, though prepared critiques follow a few.

In Volume I social and psychological aspects of ageing are considered. The earlier papers range over economics, housing, family relationships, and the community aspects of mental health, and are followed by a score of helpful contributions on the psychology of older people. Unfortunately the jargon used even in the less technical papers sometimes spoils the general reader's enjoyment. In Volume II questions of social welfare are discussed, and here the papers on the use of leisure time and on community organization are of particular value. Volume III comprises papers on the comparative biological aspects of the ageing process. Here the subject matter is strictly factual and the various authors' presentations are more taut. This volume is therefore under Dr. Nathan Shock's editorship the most successful of the first three. It will be of special value to gerontologists and to scientifically minded clinicians. In spite of its title Volume IV contains a number of papers concerned with pathological processes in ageing animals; otherwise there are clinical papers on endocrinology, the metabolism and energy requirements of old people, peripheral vascular disorders, psychiatry, and electroencephalography, together with others on some of the fundamental problems of growth and ageing of connective tissue. There are valuable contributions in the sections on respiratory physiology and on the skeletal system and calcium metabolism, though the same can hardly be said of the section devoted to therapeutics. It is this fourth volume which holds most for the practising doctor. Understandably the number of contributions to the work as a whole emanating from Great Britain is not large, because the meeting-place was so distant, but those few are of high quality.

The standard of editing, presentation, and production generally could hardly be bettered. This is a notable record of the formal work of a large international gathering, medical and non-medical. The advantages of this sort of large and lavish compendium lie in the facilities for publication it gives to the contributors, and the chance it gives for those who could not travel to participate in retrospect and to