

Book Reviews

BRIAN INGLIS, *The forbidden game. A social history of drugs*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1975, 8vo, pp. 256, illus., £4.95.

Involvement with drugs is one of the gravest social problems of today. However, it has been a feature of communities throughout history, and it is not only interesting to examine the drugs taken and the attitudes towards their use in the past, but it is valuable in assessing and handling the present-day threat. Drugs are of two kinds, those taken therapeutically, and those used “. . . to release us from normality . . .” (p. 9). Mr. Inglis is concerned with the second variety and he presents here an historic survey of their use and abuse, ranging from tea to the worst of them all, heroin. He covers many aspects of this large topic and his account is very readable, if lacking in scholarly documentation; there is, however, an eleven-page list of sources, and the author has thoughtfully deposited a copy of his text containing precise source references with the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence.

Although the earlier periods are dealt with, the more recent receive more attention because they are more relevant to the present. Control is the prime question and Inglis, citing the experience of the past, emphatically opposes the banning of drugs like cannabis, mescaline or L.S.D. Unfortunately history is of little help with the problem of how they should be legalized, and modern communities have adopted various controls for various reasons, some resembling the Spanish Inquisition, or the witch-hunts of earlier centuries or those of McCarthy in ours. Mr. Inglis believes that drug dependence is a measure of society and to cure the former the latter must change. But the suggestion that primitive man indulged in order to achieve a new level of reality seems unlikely. He was escaping from his disagreeable surroundings or from himself just as much as any hippie is today. However, to replace drugs with techniques such as meditation may be a useful approach in the attempt to limit their abuse.

HANS A. KREBS and **JULIAN H. SHELLEY**, *The creative process in science and medicine*, Amsterdam, Excerpta Medica; New York, American Elsevier, 1975, 8vo, pp. xii, 138, \$21.75 (paperback).

In May 1974 twenty-four distinguished scientists, doctors and philosophers met to discuss freely a topic divided into four sections: the analysis of scientific method and the logic of scientific discovery; patterns of creativity in animal and human behaviour; creativity in the biological sciences; the dynamics of creativity. Only four papers were presented formally and recorded here, and most of the time was devoted to discussion also reproduced. The end result is a fascinating conversation on a problem of general scientific and medical importance by men who, during their own careers in the biological sciences, have manifested inspired creativity. Throughout, a considerable amount of historical data is called upon and discussed, especially in the first section where philosophical concepts underlying the evolution of science are considered. In the fourth session, psychological and cultural factors were concentrated on, in view of the fact that motivation and environment play determining roles in the way in which a scientist plans his research.

Historians of medicine will find this book most rewarding, and it should, in fact, be required reading for them. The only criticism concerns the absence of a summary

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of the main contributions to the subject by the symposium, even though it was generally accepted that the topic is not capable of final resolution.

MARY P. WEIDEMAN (editor), *Microcirculation*, Stroudsburg, Penn., Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1974, 4to, pp. xi, 429, illus., £13.90.

The third volume in this useful series "Benchmark Papers in Human Physiology" of anthologies of classical contributions to human physiology, this book is arranged like its predecessors with facsimile reprints of extracts from books and articles, grouped in chronological sequence. The theme here is blood flow through vessels at the capillary level. Also like its forerunners, the earlier periods are less well handled and represented, and dating is obscure. Thus, if Harvey's postulation of peripheral arterial and venous linkage is included, why not deal briefly with that of Galen and Erasistratus? After all it was as essential to their primitive theory of cardiovascular function as it was to that of Harvey, and their system survived for a millennium and a half.

As it is, the selections range from Harvey (1628) to Wiederhielm (1968); the author has taken it upon herself to include one from her own writings. Again there is an inordinate bias towards American contributors, which, of course, relieves the compiler of language problems; apart from two (Harvey and Malpighi) all the work cited was published in English. Another defect of this series is also displayed here: the editor's comments are much too brief and there is little or no biographical material. Basically the idea of making readily available to students outstanding advancements in physiological thought is an excellent one, but the editors responsible for the volumes so far produced have not all been able to select their material adequately, nor provide the historical background essential for its presentation.

JAMES V. WARREN (editor), *Cardiovascular physiology*, Stroudsburg, Penn., Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1975, 8vo, pp. xviii, 441, illus., £17.45.

"Benchmark Papers in Human Physiology" is an ongoing series of anthologies of original papers reproduced in facsimile. Nine volumes are planned. In this, the fourth, there are forty-nine selections, only nine being from languages other than English, which seems to indicate a somewhat biased choice. Likewise all but nine are from the literature of the twentieth century. Although others might have chosen more widely in space and time, the contributions selected are without doubt classical. They are arranged in the following six groups: the heart and central circulation; pressure flow and electrical activity in the heart and central circulation; the blood vessels; organ blood flow; non-invasive methods of study; molecular physiology of the heart and circulation. Each section has an editorial introduction, which, although quite brief, are helpful. This, however, cannot be said of the general introduction to the book. It is naïve, full of errors, including the predictable mention of "Claudius" Galen on p. 2, and should be avoided.

Nevertheless as a collection of classical primary sources on the physiology of the cardiovascular system this book can be recommended, providing the reader is aware of the foregoing criticisms. It is unfortunate that the student, who should be encouraged to refer to it and browse in it, will not be able to own his personal copy on account of the price.