failure' and a patient with a cerebral abscess is likely to have a lumbar puncture but no brain scan. In the analysis of monocular blindness most paths indicate a vascular or demyelinating aetiology whilst optic nerve compression receives little emphasis.

The author is dissatisfied with traditional ways of teaching medicine. On the evidence of this book, however, he has not formulated an alternative approach which can be recommended to medical students.

Principles of Clinical Psychiatry
By ARNOLD M. LUDWIG. Pp. ix + 438, illustrated. Bailliére Tindall, London. Collier Macmillan, London. Free Press, New York, 1980. £15.00.

Professor Ludwig has produced a very idiosyncratic textbook of psychiatry. It is unashamedly medical in orientation. The book begins with an exposition of the logical basis of diagnosis in medicine and psychiatry. It continues with descriptions and definitions of the various signs and symptoms which need to be elucidated to reach a diagnosis. There are scattered treasures within these sections but it is doubtful if much of it would make sense to anyone who did not already possess more than a rudimentary knowledge of the subject. It is also true that some of the definitions of phenomena, such as obsessions, are tortuous and a little unorthodox.

The sections dealing with syndromes are logical and understandable but suffer major defects. They are insufficiently detailed for trainee psychiatrists but too detailed for non-psychiatrists. The text is also difficult to read because Professor Ludwig is addicted to lists and tables which break the flow of the text. Chapter 15 on drug habit disorders contains 19 such lists, 2 of which each fill 3 pages.

In summary, this is not a book one could recommend for undergraduates or for postgraduates needing to brush up their psychiatry. It is not detailed enough to serve as a basic text for trainee psychiatrists. It could only serve as an interesting alternative view of psychiatry for a trainee trying to broaden his horizons in the run-up to the M.R.C.Psych.

Standard Orthopaedic Operations
By J. CRAWFORD ADAMS. 2nd edn. Pp. 463, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London and New York, 1980. £18.00.

This second edition of Standard Orthopaedic Operations upgrades and updates a book which has become an essential for all orthopaedic registrars.

The volume contains details of all commonly performed procedures and general orthopaedic techniques and exposures are well written and beautifully illustrated. Individual operations are economically but well described and there is enough detail present fully to understand operative procedures. Recently introduced techniques including the Swiss AO internal fixation method and hip and knee replacement prostheses are included. Arthroscopy is unfortunately not included in the discussion on knee operations.

The great value of this book is that the orthopaedic surgeon in training has one volume from which he can obtain a very full outline of operative procedures. The descriptions are clear and concise. The book is well illustrated and interesting - this second edition is strongly recommended.

Talking with Patients. A Teaching Approach
Observations of a Nuffield Working Party on Communications with Patients. Pp. 55. Illustrated. Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, 1980. £0.50.

The Nuffield Trust, concerned with the practical consequences of failures of communication between doctors and patients, set up a working party to consider the skills doctors need to communicate effectively and how these can be taught. Failures of communication occur in the 2 parts of the consultation: in the interview (when the history is taken and a diagnosis reached) and in the "exposition" (the explanation and instruction part of the consultation). The failures are much more frequent, apparently, in this latter part. The documented evidence for communication problems, and ways in which they can be prevented, is based on a considerable body of recent research which is given in a most valuable annotated bibliography compiled by Professor Charles Fletcher.

The working party is impressed by the evidence that audio-visual aids can be of value in teaching communication skills.

This booklet is aimed at medical tutors, and should be read by them. There are few clinicians who could not improve their own clinical consultation technique with the aid of this useful publication and a few moments' sober reflection.

The True History of the Elephant Man
By MICHAEL HOWELL and PETER FORD. Pp. 223, illustrated. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1980. £1.25.

Joseph Carey Merrick (1862-1890) was the Leicester-born son of a warehouseman who was married to a crippled servant girl. She was also a Baptist Sunday school teacher. The name Joseph was that of his father and Carey from a leading Baptist preacher and missionary William Carey (1761-1834). Although apparently normal at birth the infant son began to grow grotesquely deformed from the age of 2 years onwards. Swellings appeared on the lips and right cheek followed by bony lumps on the forehead. A mass of flesh protruded from beneath the upper lip into a grotesque snout resembling an elephant's trunk. Joseph suffered from multiple neurofibromatosis or von Recklinghausen's disease, named after the German Professor of Pathology (1835-1910) at the new University of Strasbourg, who described his first case in 1880. Joseph became the subject of several books, a Broadway hit, a film, and he has achieved immortality as a result of the contemporary clinical and research interests of Sir Frederick Treves (1853-1923), Dorchester-born surgeon to The London Hospital.

Eventually Joseph Merrick and Frederick Treves stood facing each other in the Anatomy Department of The London Hospital. Here was a surgeon accustomed to physical distortion facing a fairground freak. Joseph's proportions were grotesque, for he was scarcely 5' 2" in height, with a measurement of 36" for the head's circumference and 12" for the right wrist and 5' for a swollen finger of the right hand. He was presented by Treves to the Pathological Society of London in 1884 and again in 1885.

This paperback is a comprehensive account by a doctor and a journalist of the complex interrelationships between Joseph and Treves, beautifully written and leaving each reader to determine where his sympathies lie. Perhaps a little bit with each of them. This is an absorbing account enriched by 3 appendices, a comprehensive bibliography and an exhaustive index. This is surely the last word and the true version of the history of the unfortunate elephant man, a fantastic account that will grip you, your wife and family from cover to cover. It is an extraordinary and moving story of a tragic Victorian and of his sad survival in a brutal world.