REVIEW.

Influenza: Essays by Several Authors. Edited by F. G. CROOKSHANK. Pp. xii+529. London: William Heinemann (Medical Books) Ltd., 1922. Price 30s. net.

THIS is a collection of essays by eleven different authors on various aspects of influenza. Seven out of the seventeen essays are written by the editor, Dr Crookshank. He deals with the subject from what may best be described as the philosophical aspect, beginning with two well written and suggestive papers on "Method and Thought," and on "First Principles of Epidemiology." He treats next of influenza from the historical point of view, and in its relation to epidemic encephalomyelitis, and includes a short article on the "Name and Names of Influenza." Two papers by Drs W. H. Hamer and D. M. Lewis follow, that of the former being upon the "Phases of Influenza," that of the latter on "Some Epidemiological considerations concerning the Prevention of Influenza." A paper by Dr Donaldson on the bacteriology of influenza is followed by one dealing with the clinical aspects of the disease written by Dr Adolphe Abrahams. Six papers are then presented dealing with influenza in its relation to the nervous system, the eye, the ear, nose, and throat, the skin, to obstetrics and to surgery, all written by specialists in these subjects. The volume is completed by an article on the "Theory of Influenza" and a summing up, both from the pen of Dr Crookshank.

From the point of view of the pathologist the articles of special interest are those by Crookshank, Donaldson, Hamer, Lewis, and Abrahams. The cultured and witty articles by Crookshank form a most refreshing contrast to the narrowness of outlook on the one hand, and the careless and inaccurate mode of thought on the other, shown by so many of the medical papers of the present day. Of the two types, the more dangerous is most certainly the slipshod thinker, who forms his inchoate theories without knowledge of scientific facts, or of the laws governing scientific evidence; of the other, it can at least be said that presuming his observations to be accurate, he has provided a solid beginning from which further research can proceed, or more far-reaching theories be derived. Dr Crookshank is one of the few speculative medical writers who not only have had a training in philosophy, but are able to maintain touch with facts.

He chides the bacteriologist (and the physician) for thinking and writing of certain bacilli, found to be the immediate agents in particular cases during an epidemic, as being the cause of the epidemic; "a position as illogical as to declare that bullets and poison gases were the cause, not merely of deaths during the late war, but of the war itself." If no other lesson were drawn from Dr Crookshank's papers than this, he would not have written in vain. It must be said, however, that there were bacteriologists who, in speaking of certain organisms concerned in influenza, were careful to qualify them as the "bacterial factor," and to make clear that the bacterium was only to be regarded as one concrete among other presumed factors. We do not feel that bacteriologists are so limited in view on this point as Dr Crookshank believes. It is natural that if a paper deals with observations on bacteria, the writer should limit himself largely to writing about these bacteria. It is also natural,

although regrettable, that workers should undertake the isolation and study of bacteria in epidemics, rather than attempt the much more difficult, less popular, and less rewarded investigation of first causes. But we must beg Dr Crookshank to believe that there are many bacteriologists, who in their study of bacteria in disease, and particularly in epidemics, are most fully aware that they are only touching on one aspect of the subject.

The paper by Donaldson on the bacteriology of influenza is a careful and well-reasoned consideration of the literature of influenza up to the year 1920, and including a few papers of 1921. He brings a considerable body of evidence to show that the primary cause of influenza is neither Pfeiffer's bacillus nor a filter passing virus, and comes into line with Dr Crookshank and other writers in the view that the bacterial infection in influenza is to be regarded as secondary rather than primary.

The other papers cannot be more than mentioned here, but Dr Hamer's is of special interest.

The book will repay careful study.

W. R. LOGAN.