The recognition and authentication of hysteria was an undoubted achievement, but it was an overstatement for Freud to liken it to Pinel's liberation of lunatics. Although Charcot's work on hypnotism fell into disrepute, he had given it a new scientific respectability, making experimentation with it acceptable and raising expectations about its therapeutic usefulness. Although this wave of interest in hypnotism was quickly over, the connections Charcot made between the clinical features of hysteria, especially traumatic hysteria, and artificially induced hypnotic phenomena, gave impetus to the continuing study of the psychopathology of hysteria and the neuroses by Babinski, Janet, Breuer and Freud. Despite its faults, Charcot's work was an important point of origin for the concept of the psychogenesis of neurosis and for the development of psychoanalysis. This was the contribution that ensured Charcot's enduring place in the history of psychiatry.

REFERENCES

15. OBITUARY (1893) Professor Charcot. Ibid., 495–496.

History of the College

The College has recently published The Royal College of Psychiatrists, a short history written by Henry R. Rollin. It begins with a glimpse at the socio-economic history of the late 18th and early 19th centuries which provided the backdrop against which the Association of the Medical Officers of Asylums and Hospitals for the Insane came into being in 1841. The Association was translated into the Medico-Psychological Association in 1865 and then in 1926, having received a Royal Charter of Incorporation, it became entitled to style itself the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, the RMPA as it was known. In 1971, after lengthy negotiations with the Privy Council, a Supplemental Charter was granted and the Royal College of Psychiatrists came into being.

The booklet is elegantly produced and printed on fine art paper. The front cover is printed from an original water-colour by Dr J. Horder, and the text is illustrated by many reproductions of photographs and drawings of the College's founding fathers who have become the folk heroes of our specialty.

The publication is modestly priced at £2.00. Copies may be purchased from the Journal office.

Stoke Park Studies: Mental Handicap

The second supplement to the Stoke Park studies of 1930 and 1961 has recently been published. Written by Dr J. Jancar, it updates the record of research and other contributions to knowledge made by staff of the Stoke Park group of hospitals (Bristol) in the period 1981–1986.