

simpler narrative fashion and makes interesting—at times fascinating—reading.

Some odd facts of general interest emerge. Pneumo-encephalographs were done of 34 of the author's patients and were abnormal in 29 cases. Findings in the author's cases suggest that hypochondriacal symptoms protect against complete breakdown in schizophrenia. He also points out that many "compulsive steady workers who cannot bear inactivity" suffer hypochondriacal breakdowns under the strain of an unduly abrupt retirement. His own cases show a peak of incidence in men at about the normal retirement age in the Netherlands.

This is quite obviously more a book for the specialist than for the general practitioner and your reviewer cannot fairly claim to have grasped all the author's arguments in the field of the psychodynamics of hypochondriasis. It does appear, however, that this is a work of major importance likely to become a standard source of reference on this complex and difficult subject.

**Health, happiness and survival.** JOHN ANTHONY PARR and ROBERT A. YOUNG. London. William Heinemann. Pp. viii + 248. Price 25s.

The reader can almost hear the tones of the radio doctor's voice as he begins this book. John Anthony Parr, whose speaking voice is so familiar and Mr R. A. Young are both experienced journalists and have together the gift of presenting a problem, whether personal or social, simply and vividly. They give advice that is clear and practical, straightforward and easy to remember though perhaps lacking in depth and subtlety for some readers.

The usefulness of the book to parents is increased by these characteristics even if it leads to many decisions and plans appearing to be simple that prove to be hard when they have to be faced. There is little risk of fostering fear and indecision from too many facts and doctrines.

The range of subject matter is very wide from the beginnings of life through childhood and adolescence to health in adult life. An excellent chapter on Factors adverse to Health and another as good on Stress Diseases are both positive in discussion, and much more is packed into 250 pages. It is obvious that there is no attempt to provide a source of detailed information (the authors are already responsible for a medical encyclopaedia), but it provides digested conclusions as a background for the reader's long-term attitudes and planning—moreover it is interesting. Social Health and Self-medication are both fascinating by reason of skilful presentation.

General practitioners could gain a good deal by studying the authors' methods of handling subjects and their ingenuity in giving unpopular advice in acceptable form. Matters likely to produce controversy between doctors and patients are either avoided or so adroitly presented that argument would not arise, but interest does. It is perhaps fathers of large families with claims to common sense who will enjoy the book most.