

**Safer obstetric care.** Operational Research Unit. Oxford Regional Hospital Board. Oxford. 1967. Pp. 28. Available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

At intervals of three years the Ministry of Health publishes a "Report on confidential enquiries into maternal deaths in England and Wales". The last four reports covering the years 1952-1963 form the basis of this small booklet which is a brief statement of some of the more important facts compiled by a statistician of the Oxford Regional Board.

Compared with the original reports, the last of which was over 90 pages, the booklet is admirably brief, more so than 28 pages suggests as some contain only a few sentences, easily assimilated. It can be read in less than half an hour and will give the general practitioner a clear impression of the mistakes that are still being made and how to avoid them, as far as they can be avoided in a service in which the human factor plays a part. Most of its statements are factual and without bias; indeed the only outrightly unacceptable suggestion is on the very last page—in a list of high risk groups requiring reference to a specialist unit five are unequivocal but the sixth, any woman whose home conditions are unsuitable, is an obvious case for delivery in a general-practitioner unit.

A useful booklet, intended for general practitioners, hospital medical staff and midwives, which should be read by all who practise obstetrics, not once only but from time to time during the next three years until it is replaced by the next edition.

**Child care.** Specially commissioned articles from the *B.M.J.* London. British Medical Association. 1966. Pp. 360. Price 30s. 0d.

The contents of this book may be well known already to several readers, since it is a collection of articles specially commissioned by and published in the *British Medical Journal* in its current practice section. The book contains 36 separate articles dealing with day-to-day problems, met by the general practitioner in patients of the age group infancy to adolescence. The aim of the authors is to advise, and recommend action for, the general practitioner, not to write a detailed clinical account for the hospital specialist. The authors are, in the main, hospital specialists themselves, but many articles are written in collaboration with a general-practitioner colleague. The subjects covered are largely medical, but some sociomedical topics are included, such as deafness, speech disorders, reading and writing difficulties, behavioural and emotional problems, puberty and the sexual life of the adolescent, and adoption.

This is a book written for the general practitioner, and it should prove most useful to him. It is nicely produced, and at 30s. it is a good buy.

**Psychiatry and anti-psychiatry.** DAVID COOPER. London, New York, Toronto. Tavistock Publications Ltd. 1967. Pp. xiii + 128. Price 25s. 0d.

Dr Cooper takes as his thesis the idea that traditional approaches to schizophrenia are irrelevant to the situation of the schizophrenic patient. To the non-psychiatrically trained it may suffice to summarize this thesis by saying that a modified form of psycho-analysis is used involving both the patient and his family.

The reviewer found this a difficult book to read. The jargon used is so specific

that it is very difficult to follow. He read the first sentence of the preface six times:

For anyone who works in the psychiatric field and who refuses to allow his critical awareness of what he is about to be numbed or engulfed by the institutionalizing processes of formal training and day-by-day indoctrination in the teaching hospital or psychiatric hospital, a number of disturbing questions arise. The reviewer still does not understand it. Those who do may wish to read the rest of the book.

**Man alive.** A survey of human physiology. G. L. McCULLOCH. London Aldus Books. 1967. Pp. 156. Price 32s. 6d. Distributed by W. H. Allen & Co.

This is an up-to-date survey of the current ideas in physiology. For casual reading by the interested layman it is excellent but as a textbook for school children it fails because at no time does Dr McCulloch give experimental evidence for his statements. Nevertheless, as an introduction to biology for the interested school child who is as yet uncertain where his future lies it will be most useful. The illustrations and presentation are so good that they will attract the interest of anyone who happens to glance through it.

**An introduction to medical genetics.** Fourth edition. J. A. FRASER ROBERTS, C.B.E., M.A., M.D., D.S.C., F.R.C.P., F.R.S. London, New York, Toronto. Oxford University Press. 1967. Pp. xii+290. Price 25s. paper covers; 38s. cloth boards.

We reviewed the second edition of this book in 1959. The format remains much the same. New material has been added to this edition without making it too bulky. It still remains a very good book for practitioners who have an interest in genetics.

**The genetics of gastro-intestinal disorders.** R. B. MCCONNELL, T.D., M.D., M.R.C.P. London. Oxford University Press. 1966. Pp. vii + 282. Price 70s. 0d.

"Genetics isn't everybody's cup of tea"—sentiments of this kind are heard all too often, but this book, the second in the Oxford series on Medical Genetics, is a healthy corrective. The pattern of illness seen by family doctors is in part determined by social and environmental factors but undoubtedly the genetic composition of the population composing the practice influences it greatly. As presented in this book genetics is seen to be good clinical medicine with a slant towards the unusual, either in terms of presentation or association of cases and the practitioner who is alerted will find much interest in reviewing the case-notes of families on his list. He, of all observers, is best placed to know the family in all its relationships and it is strange that most of the work described shows indications of its hospital origin. The clinical descriptions are clear and easy to read. Genealogies of affected families are represented by conventional diagrams and each chapter is followed by a comprehensive list of references which should satisfy the needs of any newcomer to the subject. The book will enable the practitioner to identify the unusual occurrence in his practice and show him where he may usefully follow his interest up. The research-minded