

No more clearly definable are the psychological factors that are associated with gastro-intestinal disorder. So the subject of this book is a difficult one. It is not surprising that its value is patchy. Much of what is said can neither be proved nor disproved in the present state of knowledge. The whole book is commendably short and most of it is well-written. The author's approach is admirably broad.

**The theory and practice of family psychiatry.** JOHN G. HOWELLS. Edinburgh and London. Oliver and Boyd. 1968. Pp. 924. Price £9 9s.

This large book is divided into three parts. The first takes up 118 pages and ends with 43 pages of references. This section is written in its entirety by Dr Howells, and describes his theory of family psychiatry. Parts 2 and 3 are made up of 49 chapters, three by the author himself and the rest by writers from Britain, Europe and America, many of international repute. The majority of these chapters are papers which have already been published elsewhere. This medley of articles doesn't always make for easy reading, and the quality varies considerably. The aim of family psychiatry is to treat the family unit as a whole. The adage 'there are no diseases only sick persons', is carried a step further. There are no sick individuals, only sick families. Family psychiatry is held to be more effective than the old traditional procedures. The author who is a great enthusiast and a pioneer in this field tends to overcall his hand. He suggests *every* psychiatric service *should be* a family psychiatric service. The treatment is all-embracing, covering such fields as delinquency, psychopathy, psychosomatic disease, neurosis, psychosis and mental retardation. The purpose of treatment is to produce a harmoniously functioning, healthy family group. To imply that the family must *always* be treated as a whole, rather than the individual, is surely to put the cart before the horse. It is obvious that in mental illness more than with most organic diseases, the family always needs to be supported: often the intimate relationships of the family need to be explored, and sometimes the whole family requires active treatment. It is not practicable in every case to collect the entire family for treatment sessions and the time (1½–2½ hours per session) is not always available, certainly not in general practice. The volume as a whole will be a valuable reference book in any library and this is enhanced by the vast bibliography.

**The pharmacology of inflammation.** W. G. SPECTOR, M.B., B.Chir., F.R.C.P. and D. A. WILLOUGHBY, Ph.D., M.C.PATH. London. The English Universities Press Ltd. 1968. Pp. 123. Price 40s. 0d.

This is a new book written principally for students and graduates in many disciplines who wish to learn more of a fundamental pathological process. For the general practitioner it will serve as a guide to the history and present knowledge of the mechanism of inflammation with a description of some of the problems involved in its study and the methods used to explore them. It is relatively short and readable. There are many references for those who wish to go into further detail.

**The new general practice.** Articles published in the British Medical Journal. London. British Medical Association. 1968. Pp. xi + 189. Price 15s. 0d.

This paperback, introduced by Lord Platt, reprints a selection of articles which have been published in the *British Medical Journal* over the last two years. Many of these articles are important and aspirants to membership of the College might be expected to be aware of them. Most have been written by general practitioners about studies and surveys of their own practices. To have these papers under a single cover will be found most useful to those who wish to know more about how best a general practice may be organized.