

**A synopsis of obstetrics and gynaecology.** A. W. BOURNE, F.R.C.S. and J. M. HOLMES, M.R.C.O.G. Thirteenth edition. Bristol. John Wright and Sons Ltd. 1965. Pp. vii + 680. Price 52s. 6d.

This old friend which has now reached its thirteenth edition was first published by Aleck Bourne in 1913. This is to be his last edition. J. M. Holmes who has written several chapters in it will be the author of the next. In the six years since publication of the twelfth edition obstetric knowledge has grown considerably; much new material has been included and there have been deletions and modification of matter which had become out of date. As a result the book remains an excellent synopsis of all that is important in obstetrics and gynaecology from which a general practitioner can quickly refresh his memory or bring his knowledge up to date. Some of the print is on the small side, but the book is so well laid out with prominent headings and sub-headings that the required subject is easily found, especially with the aid of a comprehensive 38-page index. A general practitioner who keeps it on his shelves will not be at a loss for concise up-to-date information on obstetrics or gynaecology.

**Cure or heal?** E. GRAHAM HOWE. London. George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 1965. Pp. 240. Price 28s.

From a book with the above title, written by a distinguished psychotherapist, one might expect a clinical study with descriptive case-histories and analyses of therapeutic methods. It is nothing of the kind: the book is more ambitious. It deals not with men but with Man, and is a philosophical treatise which is concerned not only with psychiatry but with politics, education, religion, and in fact all man's activities. The names not only of Freud and Melanie Klein, but of Christ, Laotse, Krishna and many others are invoked.

Dr Howe is concerned with reality, and the tendency of our culture to lose touch with it, to create an idealized and rosy picture which ignores the dark side of man, a side which he thinks we should accept and come to terms with. This is not only in accord with psychoanalytic thought, but is something that great poets of all ages have apprehended and expressed.

Dr Howe has much to say that is personally and deeply experienced. It is a pity, though understandable, that he finds its expression difficult. When ordinary words fail him he invents his own, such as 'egoic' man, or has recourse to diagrams. Many of these are accepted symbols, such as the Mandala, the Yin and Yan, the Chakra, and some are of less imaginative value. He states, rightly, 'Any communication must always be somewhat mysterious' and seems to fear that words may hedge around and falsify his ideas. Yet the greatest writers rivet our attention by their skilful use of words as tools of communication. This criticism should not deter those who are aware that we mostly live our lives in mental blinkers, and who are concerned about the nature of reality, from perusing what is a most stimulating and in parts profound essay.