

**Handicapped children.** Second edition. J. D. KERSHAW, M.D., B.S., M.R.C.P., D.P.H. London. William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1966. Pp. vii + 304. Price 32s.

This second edition of a valuable and well-known work has been brought up to date in those fields where additional knowledge or a change in attitude has enlarged the possibilities of effective action. It is a tribute to the original work that so little has had to be done in this regard.

The first nine chapters present the problems of the handicapped child in all their aspects—e.g. public attitudes, parental relationships, work, recreation and education etc., etc. The remainder study the various handicaps in detail and there are three useful appendices, especially that on the handicapped child and the law.

Its value can hardly be overstressed. First, as a work of reference for the enumeration and elucidation of the many handicaps which can impede a child it is unique. Secondly, the detailed information which is packed into a comparatively slender volume is so complete that an answer can be found to any conceivable problem that might perplex a medical or lay worker in the field, written as it is for both of these. Finally, the whole book is illuminated and enriched by a humanity and humility of approach which rewards for its own intrinsic worth. In a short notice it is difficult to convey the sense of knowledge of and dedication to the subject which pervades the text. But, as it is a book which should be read by all general practitioners, this omission will, it is hoped, be remedied by personal experience.

**The social responsibility of gynaecology and obstetrics.** Edited by ALLAN C. BARNES. Baltimore. John Hopkins Press. London. Oxford University Press. Pp. xiv + 210. Price 42s.

This book consists of papers presented at a conference held at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore in 1965. Among the authors, men and women, are professors of gynaecology and obstetrics, of preventive medicine, psychiatry, child psychiatry and public health administration, a social worker, a lawyer and the head of the Washington Population Reference Bureau. The editor, Professor Allan C. Barnes of the Johns Hopkins gynaecology and obstetric department, writes in the introduction of the intersection of two paths, that of his own medical discipline and "the pathway being followed by our society as it has addressed itself to examining the cause and cure of our threats and ills".

Each paper is relatively brief and presented in essay form with few tables and no sub-titles to interrupt the ease and interest of reading. In general the styles have the crystal clarity of academic authorship at its best in the U.S.A. There are no Americanisms, but probing sincerity of thought is evident in each, the legacy in that country of the earliest founders. "The time has come . . . to accept a concept which recognizes the right of the child to be well-born" (Louie Burnett, assistant professor in gynaecology and obstetrics, Johns Hopkins University) is blessedly free from the caveats which can bedevil such a statement, as also "When a

given couple chooses to produce a family of three children should they not have the right to expect the best three children which they are capable of producing". This comes from the country where some state laws embody prejudice and taboos of early and later settlers' traditions with added problems of vastness and variety, racial and financial disparities. Nevertheless, every essay applies to our own social and ethical difficulties of today and the solutions even in principle are as hard to find.

The papers are grouped under The Quality of the Next Generation and The Quantity. After Control of Neoplasia comes The Law covering divorce, abortion, artificial insemination and sterilization, then the Agencies and finally the Individual woman and doctor—the theme of motivation, personal and social runs through each essay.

The editor concludes in the last sentence "We are in a sense a society of the walking wounded, collectively overcrowded and individually hurt and the correction of this situation is the urgent task to which we should commit our thoughtful energies. The time to start was yesterday". But the book is dedicated "To our Grandchildren and to their Grandchildren, for only by dedicating our thoughtful efforts on their behalf can we mould a society fit to receive them or indeed create citizens fit to be born".

The authors are not alarmist in matter or manner but discuss the problems of society without defence or excuse, each in their own range. Our own problems vary in social expression perhaps but are basically the same. This is an exciting book to read and every part of it is relevant to general practice.

**Hypnosis of man and animals.** FERENC ANDRAS VÖLGYESI. London. Bailliere, Tindall & Cassell Ltd. 1966. Pp. xiv + 216. Price 75s.

Hypnotism frequently arouses incredulity and the title of this work, though appropriate, may do little to appease the unbelievers.

Caesar would have rejoiced at the book being divided into three parts, even more so when Völgyesi tells how unarmed and single-handed the Emperor subdued a band of pirates by the strength of his personality and gaze. But Caesar's general practitioner would have rejoiced less, indeed even been perplexed to know what to make of this detailed and unusual work.

The intriguing first third of the book is devoted to the history of hypnotism. The comments of Mesmer's partisans to the slighting remarks of the 1784 Commission appointed by the French Academy of Science, at the command of the King, are just as apt today as formerly. "A curative result of mesmerism has to be ascribed to the power of imagination and fancy. Doctors are forbidden under the penalty of . . ." The partisans pressed the point that as the commission accepted the curative aspect of mesmerism this fact should have been investigated. The commission's view differs little from today's sceptics.

The middle of this charming book is devoted to the comparative anatomy and physiology of the central nervous system, and the author's theories