

The doctor and the child welfare centre. MEDICAL OFFICER, TUNBRIDGE WELLS. Hodgetts Limited. Pp. 35. Price 4s. 0d.

The purpose of this booklet is set out in the introduction in the following words:

"This booklet is produced in the hope that any doctor who is interested in child health and developmental paediatrics may learn from it something of the work of a child welfare centre, whether he works in a hospital, in general practice or with a local authority."

It describes in general terms the type of work that should be carried out, how it should be done and makes useful suggestions concerning premises and equipment. The importance of knowing the previous medical history and immunological state of the children is stressed. This is sensible and supports the idea of many general practitioners, that they themselves are the best people to carry out this type of work.

It is a little surprising to find that the health visitor is supposed to run the centre and be responsible for patient flow. Surely this work should be carried out by the secretarial or reception staff. This particular attitude illustrates one of the basic faults of the health service, that is in using people to carry out tasks for which their training does not necessarily fit them, and even worse, using them when they could be more profitably employed in the technical work for which they have been trained.

One of the most valuable sections of this booklet is the A.B.C. of useful information that covers not only child welfare but the whole range of the local authority health service and the social service of the country as a whole.

The booklet can be confidently recommended to any general practitioner wishing to set up his own infant welfare clinic and should be read by all doctors undertaking vocational training in general practice.

Transactions of the International Chest and Heart Conference, 1967. London. Chest and Heart Association. Pp. 219 + supplements. Price 42s. 0d.

The Chest and Heart Association had its origins as an association concerned with pulmonary tuberculosis, but with the control of tuberculosis it has broadened its interests to all chest and heart disorders. Part of its regular activities is to hold international conferences, and this is a collection of papers presented at one such conference in April 1967. There were 17 sessions during four days and the topics ranged widely and included fungal diseases of the lungs, prevention of tuberculosis, psychosomatic aspects of chest and heart disorders, cancer of the lung, coronary heart disease and hypertension, strokes, atmospheric pollution, rehabilitation and the role of local authorities in chest and heart diseases.

This report, in common with other reports of large conferences, has the drawback of being bitty and uneven, the material written by a large number of contributors and the quality variable. There are 80 papers in a little more than 300 pages and therefore they all are short and cannot possibly tackle important subjects adequately. It is pertinent to question the purpose of such a publication. Understandably it is of some use to those attending the conference but only as a reminder of what took place and not as a true record because questions and discussions are not included.

The list of the members of the Council of the Chest and Heart Association on the front page of this volume includes representatives from the specialties but not one general practitioner. Surely this is an error of omission that should be corrected. Chest and heart disorders account for a very high proportion of the

general practitioners' work and many aspects of the nature and management of these disorders are very different from hospital practice.

Handbook of paediatrics. Seventh edition. HENRY K. SILVER, M.D., C. HENRY KEMPE, M.D. and HENRY B. BRUYN, M.D. Los Altos, California. Lange Medical Publications. Oxford. Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1967. Pp. 648. Price 42s. 0d.

This popular handbook has now reached its seventh English edition together with several foreign language editions. The general concept of the book remains the same; a concise clinical handbook to have handy for quick reference in the consulting room, but not one for detailed study in the library. The text has been thoroughly revised and some of the chapters have been rearranged. The chapter on infectious diseases in the sixth edition has been broken down into four shorter chapters in this the seventh, i.e. infectious diseases (a) viral and rickettsial, (b) bacterial and spirochetal, (c) protozoal and metazoal, (d) mycotics.

The chapter on infectious diseases of the CNS has been dispensed with and the relevant parts included in the chapters on infectious diseases. The chapter on laboratory tests has been transferred to the appendix. The appendix has also been extended by the inclusion of tables on time of appearance of epiphyseal ossification centres and CSF in pathological conditions.

This is a most excellent book, it is concise and yet complete. The information is readily available due to the clear layout of the text. It is a good and worthwhile buy.

The will to health. Second edition. HARLEY WILLIAMS. London. Health Horizon Limited. Chest and Heart Association. 1967. Pp. 140. Price 12s. 6d.

There is nothing in this book to recommend it to the attention of a general practitioner, and very little that will be of use to his patients. There are a number of messages for middle-aged misanthropes and, appropriately, a final chapter on death. The opening chapters usher in a crusade with "the will to health" as its slogan and a mixture of faith, introspection and autosuggestion as its ingredients. But very quickly the reader becomes bogged down in a morass of morbid details. It appears that to achieve the salvation brought by your faith in the will-to-live you must first go through processes of stress and pain and suffering, whether it be from a peptic ulcer, coronary thrombosis or chronic bronchitis. Lip-service is paid to preventive medicine, yet, in chapters on these three conditions there is not a single mention of cigarette smoking. In a chapter on self-medication there is confusion between narcotics and tranquillizers. The insomniac should not take a barbiturate, he is told, or he will be less efficient next day than if he had done without sleep. Perhaps he will derive comfort when later he reads that alcohol is a hypnotic and a narcotic, though he will gain no information on his efficiency on the morning after. "Facing an operation" starts off bright and breezy, but when it comes to convalescence we are plunged into the depths of gloom when we are told on page 85 that nothing can shorten this tedious process, that the first estimates of its duration should be doubled. Fortunately, when we turn to page 86 we are assured that the best form of convalescence is to lead a normal life plus a siesta. The conclusion at which one arrives at the end of the chapter on travel is that the believer in the will-to-health ought really to stay at home. This is not a book to be taken seriously.