domiciliary and front-line care—describes the care given in each of these fields, the part general practitioners play in it, the attitudes of the patients and the views of the doctors on the present organization.

This book has two main purposes: first to describe the care given by the general practitioner service and secondly to discover the attitudes of both patients and doctors to this care. The author accepts that patients cannot assess the clinical acumen of their doctor but in every other respect the aims of the study are fully and elegantly implemented. We are used to the care with which studies by the the Institute of Community Studies are mounted and this is no exception. The combination of a strict scientific methodology to establish a clear factual and incontrovertible background with a well written descriptive text is also typical of earlier publications. General practitioners may well be surprised at some of the characteristics which patients attribute to or expect of their general practitioners but on the whole it would seem that they live up to most of the expectations of their patients.

However, the author concludes that "The most obvious flaw in the present organization of the general practitioner service that emerges from this study is the uncertainty about the doctor's role". She concludes that there are two main basic ingredients in the prescription for the cure, namely ". . . a critical evaluation of the job to be done and experiments with different forms of organization". There is an interesting section on comparisons between members and non-members of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

This is a well written, readable book though containing the minimum of subjective opinion and the maximum of fact. It should be read by all general practitioners, particularly those who think they know what their patients expect of them and believe about them.

Community as doctor. R. N. RAPOPORT. London. Social Science Paperbacks in association with Tavistock Publications. 1967. Pp.x+325. Price 25s. 0d.

This book deals with the work of the Social Rehabilitation Unit at Belmont Hospital which is itself an experiment in 'milieu therapy'. The work of the unit in the development of a milieu therapy programme is considered against the following theoretical framework: (1) The formation of a treatment ideology, (2) the organization of staff roles, (3) the organization of the patient role, (4) the involvement of individuals external to the hospital in treatment and, (5) the conceptualization of treatment and rehabilitation as goals.

The authors comment, "Ideologies are formal systems of ideas or beliefs that are held with great tenacity and emotional investment, that have self-confirming features, and that are resistant to change from objective rational reappraisal. Ideologies not only perceive and interpret the world around them in terms of the precepts of their own system of beliefs, but they tend to be especially convinced of the moral worth and special importance of their own particular orientations". The evolution of this ideology by the therapy group of the unit, grew out of a reaction to the obvious deficiencies of a system based on custodial care. The awareness and sensitivity of the unit to ideological concepts has not diminished their insight into their own techniques and there are interesting observations on discrepancies between the methods used and roles taken by the individual therapists and the formal methods and roles as logically elaborated in the ideology. In particular it highlights the inherent discrepancies between Freudian concepts which form the basis for the unit's ideology and the facts of sociological and community life.

In some respects the detailed development of the community care concept of

mental illness has resulted from and been made necessary by the over emphasis accorded to the individual by Freud and those who have subsequently been influenced by and developed his concepts. It may well be that much which would seem self evident to pragmatic general practitioners reflects simply a brain washing and adaptive exercise to correct this ideological defect.

A symposium on the child. Edited by JOHN A. ASKIN, M.D., ROBERT E. COOKE, M.D. and J. ALEX HALLER, M.D. Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A. The Johns Hopkins Press. Pp. 376. 80s. 0d.

For an English non-specialized medical reader the most significant thing about this book may be its comparative composition. An English book thus titled would almost certainly be concerned chiefly with children, perhaps in sickness rather than health but intact and considered, as it were, 'in the round'. In this handsome volume it seems fair to say that techniques—surgical, biochemical, experimental and other—not always even having special reference to conditions peculiar to childhood, have pride of place; the child in health is well nigh absent, the whole child, even ailing, appears but seldom. Except for a review of the history of what has become the Children's Centre of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, whose dedication on the hospital's 75th anniversary in 1964 was the occasion for this 'symposium', the longest of the 23 papers here presented is on the reconstruction of the hypospadiac urethra and several others are as specialized and of greater technical complexity.

The impression conveyed of advancing techniques, especially surgical, and of their manifest appeal to those whose portraits appear at the heads of their papers is very great. Could the fact, recorded in one of the later, more speculative papers, that in infant mortality the U.S.A. is falling behind other nations, the curve flattening there while elsewhere it goes on falling, bear some relation to the direction in which the energies and abilities of their medical profession appear to be drawn?

A synopsis of children's diseases. Fourth edition. JOHN RENDLE-SHORT, M.A., M.D., M.R.C.P., D.C.H. and O. P. GRAY, M.B., CH.B., M.R.C.P., D.C.H. 1967. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. Pp. xii + 684. Price 52s. 6d.

This is a splendid book. No general practitioner who wishes to remain one jump ahead of health visitor or trainee can afford not to buy it—having said that, it is perhaps permissible to dilate a little. The prose style is laconic to a degree and highly reminiscent of one's own lecture-notes, syntax being thrown to the winds. It is extremely comprehensive yet the contents are so arranged that quick reference is easy, and the index is all that could be desired.

The dilemma which faces all writers of synopses—how to be brief without being dogmatic—is dealt with in summary fashion by the authors; they seize the beast by the horns and unceremoniously throw it—they are gloriously and, one presumes, unrepentantly dogmatic. The experienced practitioner will find much with which he will violently disagree. The book abounds with such statements as the following: "There is no medical indication for circumcision." ". . . extremely doubtful whether tonsillectomy ever justifiable." "Strapping (of umbilical hernia) if parents (or others) insist." "Teething. A normal physiological process. Symptoms probably nil." It is fair to add that all such dogmatisms are preceded by cogent arguments for their acceptance.

The book also contains a most useful section on pathological and haemato-