

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-

logical norms which is well-indexed and easy of access. Altogether a most useful work, and well up to the standard of other volumes in this series.

**Surgery in infancy and childhood.** Second edition. W. M. DENNISON, M.D., F.R.C.S. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1967. Pp. xvi + 597. Price 70s. 0d.

The title of this book *Surgery in infancy and childhood*, may well suggest to the general practitioner that it is a specialized work not intended for him. If he has this impression, and does not read it, he will miss an experience both pleasurable and profitable. This book describes generally surgical diseases of infants and children and their treatment, and is not a manual of operative surgery. It is based on lectures and demonstrations designed for final-year students of the Glasgow Medical School and has a freshness of approach which stems from the fact that it represents personal views and was originally delivered 'live'.

Chapters I-IX are on general topics. They are written in an attractive style, with a strong tincture of common sense, and matters are not allowed to get out of proportion. Chapter I, on Surgery in Infancy and Childhood, gives a general view of the subject, dealing with the difference between children and adults, their reaction to trauma and infection, and similar topics. The advice it contains is of great value, and the same applies to Chapter IV, Surgery in the Newborn, which contains a survey of neonatal surgical conditions and emphasizes the importance of early diagnosis and treatment, especially for certain congenital lesions. Chapters VI and VII, on Trauma and Infection also make good general reading.

Chapters X-XXV deal with the subject in more detail on a regional basis. Chapter XI, Abdominal Pain in Infancy and Childhood is a helpful contribution on a symptom which is often difficult to interpret, and where misinterpretation may lead to tragedy. Chapter XVIII on The Thorax and Chapter XIX on The Head contain much useful information not always to be found in one place.

The general lay-out of the book is pleasing. The illustrations are good, and have the added virtue of showing what they are meant to show. One small criticism—the paper is so glossy that it reflects the light and tends to interfere with easy reading. This is an excellent book, well worth reading. More than that, it is a book to keep, and therefore well worth buying.

**A short textbook of psychiatry.** W. L. LINFORD REES, B.S.C., M.D., F.R.C.P., D.P.M. London. English Universities Press Ltd. 1967. Pp. x + 305. Price 25s. 0d.

Recently my young cousin returned from a student's psychiatric internship at an American hospital. His command of psychiatric terms was such that I had to shield behind a wall of anecdotes. I decided to read a textbook of psychiatry as a means of defence. Next day I received a psychiatric textbook to review.

The author states that psychiatry is a generality as well as a speciality because it is indispensable in all branches of medicine and surgery. Psychology is given considerable emphasis (85 pages), likewise, genetics and social psychiatry are emphasized. Psychosomatic medicine is given 21 pages; child psychiatry 13 pages and mental subnormality 15 pages and the doctor-patient relationship is emphasized throughout. All varieties of treatment are used and discussed, psychotherapy, psychopharmacy, physical treatment, social and occupational therapy and rehabilitation. The book is up to date. The only word is psyc-