drugs and poisons (R. Goulding) and, by the author of the section in the main work, on tetanus and leprosy, J. W. G. Smith. All reveal the usefulness of the design for future volumes. Bibliographies throughout must be valuable for those deeply involved with these special interests. The index is easy to use as in the original publications.

This book is of great use as a single volume, apart from its special value in maintaining the currency of the original publication.

Men in middle life. KENNETH SODDY with MARY C. KIDSON. London. Tavistock Publications. 1967. Pp. xii + 485. Price 63s. 0d.

This is one of the cross cultural studies in mental health and is described as "Based on the study made by the one time Scientific Committee of the World Federation for Mental Health".

This book is not an easy one to read for two reasons. First because of its sources as set out in the subtitle above, the text includes endless references in parenthesis. Though disturbing to uninformed concentration it may well be less so than the interruption of endless footnotes. Secondly, again due to the background material the range of human material is great both in social and cultural differences, and from nations whose immediate past history affecting the lives of their middle-aged members is variable. Nevertheless, it is the study of these different influences that reveal the variations in attitude of men and women between 40 and 60 to the younger generation and to the family situations they experience. The contrasts in national background to the development of the middle-aged who grew up in say Imperial Austria or as an underdeveloped race, is shown to affect attitudes to their descendants reared in modern, tiny Austria or in rapid emergence from primitive conditions, that can be disturbingly significant to their societies.

Once involved the more uninformed medical reader can find that absorption increases, and that relevance of the discussions and the subject matter to our own work and to our personal and family lives is very great. The main title is somewhat misleading since exploration of development up to maturity with the changing claims of industrial sophistication is obviously an important part of the book. The description of *rites de passage* of this transitional phase of living under varying circumstances is absorbing, in addition to their effects on attitudes in the middle age that succeeds them in time. Equally the interest of adjustments to retirement and involution, so soon to follow, is a natural part of the problems to be faced or evaded by all who approach them.

There is need for investigations, very long term, on such matters as adolescent friendship patterns affecting the behaviour of the same individuals 20 years later. Other unknowns are the ages of the greatest enjoyment in different cultures, the effect of the impact of mass media on different phases, causes and results of social change and adaptability to it at different individual ages. These are a very few of the large areas of the unknown among the population for whom we care as family doctors. Our daily work brings us up against rigidity of thought and action, but how little do we tend to consider the family and the social habits that influence or arise from it.

The overlap of subject matter with our own day-to-day knowledge of reactions in situations related to illness and stress is huge and could initiate new lines of research where time in terms of decades is the index. There is a rich and international bibliography and a useful index.