

Health visiting practice. MARY SAUNDERS, S.R.N., Pt.I.C.M.B., H.V. The Commonwealth and International Library of Science Technology Engineering and Liberal Studies, Oxford, London, Edinburgh. Pergamon Press. 1968. Pp. vii + 112. Price: Hard cover 25s. 0d. Flexi cover 12s. 6d.

Potentially this is a most important book. It is written for the practising health visitor and the mature woman just beginning her field-work, and has a chapter: "Working with the general practitioner". It is an admirable summary of the administrative problems and involvements which exist for health visitors and therefore it will help a general practitioner to read this book, as he will find a clearly stated case of the administrative routine. But it is also a most disappointing book. Maybe it was asking too much, maybe it was not in the author's remit, but the reviewer kept searching for a spark of real wisdom and a thumbnail sketch as to where the health visitor can be a living part of community care, of general practice. The dry recital and description of how to keep records and write reports only led to an emphasis of the routine of it all; the doubtful value in a community where the educational and cultural pattern is being turned upside down; where the knocking of authority is the first and foremost sport; where people claim to make a contribution by routines, which just will not stand up to scrutiny.

Nevertheless, this is a useful summary of what is being done by health visitors today, how they do it, and how they organize it. It does make one sad. For example, why, after such an expensive and prolonged in-training, should health visitors spend two hours each day writing up records and reports? Surely even for health visitors the pennyfarthing days should be over. But when we find this skilled expert must do things as they were done 30 years ago, or even longer, one despairs that the chapter on the future is nothing but a pious hope.

Adolescent drug dependence. C. W. M. WILSON. Oxford. Pergamon Press Ltd. 1968. Pp. xviii + 515. Price £8 0s. 0d.

The appearance of this book is timely indeed, coinciding as it does with the controversial Wootton Report on the use of cannabis. It is a compilation by the Society for the Study of Addiction based on papers presented at a conference in London in 1966. The lapse of three years has not resulted in any loss of authority.

Contributors from both sides of the Atlantic described human and animal studies of the pharmacology of both 'hard' and 'soft' drugs and gave accounts of the clinical consequences of their use, ranging from alteration of mood to death. A series of post-mortem photographs from New York shows the reality of the ultimate hazard which the

heroin-dependent adolescent may face. Of greater relevance to general practice are the chapters on recognition of dependence syndromes and of the epidemiology of drug taking. Far too many addicts obtain their drugs, for their own use and for sale to others, from general practitioners and their deceptions are many and ingenious. The amphetamines and barbiturates, singly or together, may induce a psychosis. Phenmetrazine and drinamyl dependence are fully discussed and so is the increasing use of L.S.D.

The legal aspects of narcotics control, differing from relative liberality in the United Kingdom to penal in the United States, are fully discussed, and arguments for and against the relaxation of controls on cannabis are both presented, foreshadowing the present discussions. The conclusion that penalties for those who 'push' drugs should be severe is generally agreed and the reader may feel that this would be inadequate without comparable penalties for possession of drugs of addiction and abuse.

This book gives fascinating insight into the behaviour patterns of the teenage group with its compulsions on the one hand to rebel and on the other to conform. The association of drug dependence with delinquency and crime is clearly brought out and there is a glossary of phrases of the jargon of the addict and his suppliers. This clearly reflects the influence of the U.S.A.

It is a sad commentary on civilized man that this book could be written at all. It will help many of us to face the problem now it is here with greater understanding and effectiveness and at this time it is particularly welcome.

Practical electrocardiography. Fourth edition. HENRY J. L. MARRIOTT, M.D. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. Baltimore. The Williams and Wilkins Co. 1968. Pp. xiii + 282. Price £3 12s. 6d.

This important book on electrocardiography has now reached its fourth edition. The choice of books on this subject is large but many are elementary or so similar in content that the need for some of them is obscure. The general excellence of this one is unusual. The style is clear and lucid and attention has been given to placing illustrative tracings near the relevant text, thus avoiding a common source of irritation to the reader. The amount of space devoted to the various sections is very well balanced and undue emphasis thereby avoided. At the end of most chapters there are review tracings on which the reader can examine himself to be sure he has learned what he has read, and the answers are given at the end of the book. Very comprehensive lists of references are also included at the ends of the chapters. The illustrative reproductions of tracings are large, clear, very numerous and modern—that is, they are all black tracings on white background. The general index and