An outline of psychiatry for students and practitioners. Second edition. FRANK FISH, M.B., M.R.C.P., M.R.C.P.E., D.P.M. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Limited. 1968. Pp. vii+292. Price £2 2s. 0d.

The late Professor Fish was a disciple of Kraepelin, and this somewhat dogmatic book is, as would be expected, strong on nomenclature and classification. A great mass of factual information is lightened by a shrewd wit, which occasionally goes too far, as when he writes "What really determines whether a patient is taken on for analysis is his ability to pay."

There is a clear section on Psychiatry and the Law, and a good glossary. The book will be mainly useful to students, but could find a place on a general practitioner's reference shelf.

Textbook of physiology and biochemistry. Seventh edition. GEORGE BELL, B.Sc., M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S.E., J. NORMAN DAVIDSON, *C.B.E.*, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P., F.R.I.C., F.R.S., and HAROLD SCARBOROUGH, M.B., Ph.D., F.R.C.P. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1968. Pp. viii+1,268. Price £4.

In the textbook world of medical students, 'B.D.S.' is a symbol quite on its own. The seventh edition has now appeared three years after its predecessor. To revise, re-write and re-edit 1,200 pages in three years is a great achievement. In no other sphere than in the basic sciences of physiology and biochemistry is the tremendous accumulation of knowledge more clearly demonstrated.

The general practitioner frequently feels that he is sitting on his knowledge of basic science as though on an ice-flow which is separating itself wider and wider from the general knowledge and understanding of science, and it seems a forlorn hope to bridge this widening gap unless the wind changes or the currents make us drift back to the main (arctic) continent.

Now some postgraduate courses include the basic sciences—which will help us in general practice to drift back into the general climate of scientific knowledge but, until such postgraduate courses are commonplace, 'B.D.S.' is the essential book to lessen this isolation in general practice from basic scientific knowledge of biochemistry and physiology. Its formidable size (and weight) is offset by many readable chapters though some contributors still indulge in long and involved sentences. It is stimulating and essential to the understanding of progress to dip into this comprehensive yet refreshingly interesting tome. Nucleolides and nucleic acids—enzymes—biological oxidation—lipid metabolism—the formed elements of the blood—water, electrolyte and acid base balance—the endocrine glands—cell division and heredity—growth and senescence—are a few of the chapters which would help any practitioner of more than 12 years vintage.

It surely is a must in any regional postgraduate medical centre library.

One special feature of this book is that the editors have been careful to be consistent with the terminology and conventions of expression which, in many other books overlapping two adjoining sciences, are woefully inconsistent as each branch of science tends to develop its own language. The other helpful point is the wide-ranging list of references for each major item.

'B.D.S.' is keeping up to date by becoming more readable and better illustrated. It is recommended as a guide through the mass of evolving knowledge in physiology and microbiology.

Handbook of communicable diseases and school health. A guide for medical officers of schools. Fourteenth edition. Edited by P. DE BEC TURTLE, V.R.D., M.A., B.M., B.Ch., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H. London. J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1969. Pp. xi+141. Price 15s. 0d.

This concise and reasonably comprehensive handbook should be in the possession of all who have to supervise communicable diseases in small communities, be they schools, universities or larger institutions. There are few errors, though it seems strange that no mention was made of treatment under poliomyelitis. The details of the different forms in which viral infections manifest themselves are clearly put, even though our knowledge of these is rapidly increasing all the time. The details in Section 6 on the medicosocial problems of adolescence are brief and could be amplified in future editions for those of us who have to deal with the older adolescents as seen in universities and colleges of further education.

It was certainly cheering to read at the beginning exactly how much one is entitled to claim for services. Maybe many of us do not claim a full share of monies earned.

Disease in infancy and childhood. Sixth edition. R. W. B. ELLIS, *O.B.E.*, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., and R. G. MITCHELL, M.D., F.R.C.P.E., D.C.H. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1968. Pp. vi+687. Price £4.

Professor Ellis died in 1966 within a year of the publication of the fifth edition of his textbook. The work of revision has now been taken over by Professor Ross G. Mitchell of Aberdeen. With a new editor there are bound to be many changes. But although Professor Mitchell claims that nearly every chapter has been largely rewritten the general form of the book remains the same, and those familiar with previous editions will be able to find their way around just as they used to.