

final short chapter on nursing coronary heart disease patients at home. Brief sections on causation, signs and symptoms and complications lead on to the main theme i.e. nursing care. These chapters are clear and succinct and will repay study by all those concerned in the management of this very common disease. The reviewer is not quite so happy about the chapter headed "The use of the machines"—the electrocardiograph and the cathode-ray oscilloscope; this chapter covers 34 of the total 88 pages of text and it attempts too much. It is expecting a lot of even an experienced nurse that she (or he) should be able to recognize a v. nodal rhythm, a wandering pace-maker of even bundle-branch block.

There are a number of minor deviations that might be looked at when preparing the next edition, e.g. the diagram of atrial flutter (on page 57) is unusual, the use of quinidine in atrial fibrillation is falling out of favour as portable and efficient defibrillators become more readily available; per contra, there is no mention of lignocaine which is finding favour in the treatment of ventricular paroxysmal tachycardia. Lastly, in the description of high blood pressure the reviewer found no mention of the diastolic component. These, however, are minor blemishes and a nursing colleague who spends eighteen shillings on this book will not have done so needlessly.

New editions

Pediatrics. Fourteenth edition. HENRY L. BARNETT, M.D., ARNOLD H. EINHORN, M.D. New York. Butterworths. 1968. Pp. xxv+1847. Price £10 15s. 0d. (£10.75p).

The original Holt's *Diseases of infancy and childhood* first appeared in 1896. This, the fourteenth edition, is the second to appear under its new and abbreviated title. It has also, according to the editor in his preface, been almost entirely rewritten to bring it into line with new trends in child health services in the United States. The psychological, physiological and biochemical aspects of children's diseases are discussed, as well as the clinical.

Like all encyclopaedic textbooks it is easy to find fault with details; the perfect textbook covering an entire subject has yet to be written. What the potential purchaser will want to know is: Is this the sort of book I am looking for?

Because it is, in effect, a first edition, incorporating new ideas, Barnett's book does offer advantages over other textbooks on paediatrics. The attempt to cover the physiological and biochemical bases of diseases have in the main been successful; but the psychological views are somewhat superficial. The social aspects of paediatrics are also not discussed in any great detail, and, of course, the

social services available in Britain are not dealt with at all. (In passing it is worth pointing out that American paediatricians appear to have much of which to be envious in the facilities available to those of us—general practitioners, local authority medical officers and paediatricians—who are responsible for child health in this country. The 'new pediatrics' which is being evolved in the States has much to learn from British experiences of the past 70 years.)

The type is clear and easy to read. The popular double column page is used. There are several diagrams of the type usually found in scientific papers which are easy to follow but the photographic illustrations are poor. At the beginning of the book there are eight pages of colour illustrations. They would not be missed if they had been omitted.

There is an index but it is not very helpful. For example, there are two references to enuresis; one during acute illness, the other as a psychopathological symptom. The next on the first aspect is brief; it merely indicates the occurrence. The second appears under psychological abnormalities of growth. It commences: "This condition has been discussed elsewhere." Where? Perhaps the author is referring to other books on the subject, because the index at the back is no help. (The reviewer checked alternative headings: Toilet training refers to the same pages as enuresis and bed-wetting refers us back to the original heading.)

General practitioners in Britain and parts of the Commonwealth still play a major part in the child health services of their country. When they practice in groups at least one of them usually takes a special interest in children. For such a general practitioner this book would make a pleasant gift; it should be an addition to his library of books on children's diseases, not the foundation stone.

A textbook of psychosexual disorders. Second edition. CLIFFORD ALLEN, M.D., M.R.C.P., D.P.M. London. 1969. Oxford University Press. Pp. viii+478. Price £3 10s. (£3.50p).

For one who would unashamedly admit to being categorized as having an average or only slightly above average interest in psychiatry with general practice, it was with some apprehension that the reviewer started to read this book. However, it is eminently readable and Dr Allen does not hesitate to put forward his own sometimes controversial views. After reading the first few chapters the impression was that the review would have to finish with the statement that the book would be of some interest to general practitioners but few would wish to buy it. As he proceeded, however, he began to have doubts about this and wondered if general practitioners should be advised to buy it because it contains some topics relevant to the problem in practice. The latter section of the

book made him change his mind again. The section on treatment is, for the general practitioner, very disappointing. This can be summed up by the fact that in the references at the end of this chapter only four out of 27 have been published in the last decade, and nine were published prior to the last war. Anxiety is given as the cause of some psychosexual disorders but the modern psychotherapeutic agents are not even mentioned.

The commonest psychosexual problem dealt with in general practice is probably secondary impotence in the male (vaginismus seems to be dealt with adequately by the gynaecologist without reference to psychiatry). Even impotence is not all that common. Advice is given in the book that all patients with this complaint should receive a full physical examination (including possibly hormone assays) to include endocrine or neurological causes. There is doubt if this is generally accepted in practice. The dictum that impotence is rarely the presenting symptom if the primary cause is organic and that if it is the presenting symptom, we can go on to finding and treating the psychogenic cause is more practicable.

It is doubtful if this book was intended for general practitioners. It will be useful to those who are enthusiastic about psychotherapy and will be of limited interest to the others.

Baillière's handbook of first aid. Sixth edition.

Edited by STANLEY MILES, C.B., M.D., M.Sc., D.T.M. & H. London. Baillière, Tindall, & Cassell. 1970. Pp. vii+336. Price 20s. (£1.00).

Teaching first aid. Edited by STANLEY MILES,

C.B., M.D., M.Sc., D.T.M. & H., and PETER J. ROYLANCE, R.D., M.D., Ch.B. London. Baillière, Tindall and Cassell. 1970. Pp. vii+103. Price 18s. (90p).

These two books go hand-in-hand. The first is a detailed account of first aid and its principles, omitting no detail which might be helpful to the beginner who wishes to understand not only what to do, but the reasons for doing it.

The second book, 'Teaching first aid', is intended to guide medical practitioners who are instructing classes in first aid. It is full of excellent suggestions about teaching methods and gives many examples of how to get lessons across.

Both books ought to be in the hands of every doctor who is interested in promoting knowledge of first aid. They are up-to-date in detail and well designed each for its own purpose. They are recommended by the Medical Commission on Accident Prevention and deserve high praise.

Sanity, madness and the family. Second edition.

R. D. LAING and A. ESTERSEN. London. Tavistock Publications. 1970. Pp. xii+272. Price £2 5s. (£2.25).

This book describes some of the family life of eleven patients firmly diagnosed as 'schizophrenic'. Different members of the family are interviewed and recorded separately and in conversation with each other. The authors ask: Are the experience and behaviour that psychiatrists take as symptoms and signs of 'schizophrenia' more socially intelligible than has come to be believed? Their own answer is yes, but the preface to this second edition stresses how limited is the question they ask. "Agnes and other patients we have studied have all come to be regarded as suffering from some meaningless pathological process. By building up a picture of the actual situation in which Agnes has been living for years, we begin to see that she is struggling to make sense of a senseless situation—senseless at any rate from her position within it." The senseless situation turns out to be almost always the attitudes of close relatives, in particular their ambiguity, internal dishonesty (unconscious maybe), their 'manifest contradictions' and mystifications. The patient is in the position of Pavlov's dog faced with two contradictory stimuli.

As doctors we have to put ourselves in the patient's shoes during each consultation. 'Schizophrenic' patients behaviour and thinking is so strange to us that we may find this essential task difficult or impossible with these particular patients. By lighting up the dark part of the stage in which these people are acting their lives, the authors make it possible to some extent to understand the meaning of what they say or do. We begin to be able to feel with them. Indeed it is hard, reading the book (which is very well written) not to feel angry with these stupid prejudiced parents, until we realize that they themselves are in a tight corner, that they suffer too, that they had their parents to cope with and that we witness a process handed on from generation to generation—a tragedy of inheritance and upbringing.

The value of this book is not just in relation to 'schizophrenia'. It throws light on families. We general practitioners often claim to know about and to deal with families, but have we ever counted the occasions when we do more than cope with the problems of individual members? 'If one wishes to know how a football team concert or disconcert their actions in play, one does not think only or even primarily of approaching this problem by talking to the members individually. One watches the way they play together'. Their techniques of interview take these writers a long way towards understanding how people really behave towards their children, parents and siblings when the blinds are down.