

**Towards community mental health.** First edition. Edited by JOHN D. SUTHERLAND, *C.B.E.* PH.D. London. Tavistock Publications. 1971. Pp. xii+130. Price £2.40.

Presented here are papers read before The Royal Medico-Psychological Society. Eight workers — psychologists, educationalists and doctors—have contributed to this book, and in their various fields have considered what may be wrong in society and are thinking about how to put it right. Accepted ideas on education in this country take a great beating, as do the industrial hierarchy, the family, and even the caring professions themselves. One has the impression that the authors are more thinking aloud than proclaiming The New Faith, and indeed, some of the arguments cancel out. This is good stimulating reading, and worthy of consideration as a basis for preliminary discussion which might in time lead to tentative moves towards a better and healthier community, but . . . The cynic will observe that this all begins to sound like The Gospel of Psychiatry Unlimited, and the realist will reflect that with an educational system and a health service that are both running with hot bearings, all this is likely to be just pie-in-the-sky. Uncommitted minds will find many ideas expressed here worthy of thought and incubation, even if they are not yet ready for implementation.

**The leaves of spring.** A study in the dialectics of madness. A. ESTERSON. London: Tavistock Publications. 1970. Price £3.15.

Dr Esterson tells the story of a "mad" (schizophrenic) girl and tries to gain and to convey to the reader an understanding of this madness by studying the interactions of the members of the girl's family. Dr Esterson used an interviewing technique described in a previous book (R. D. Laing and A. Esterson, *Sanity, madness, and the family*): the members of the family were interviewed individually and together, the interviews were tape-recorded, and the tape recordings analysed.

As the story of the schizophrenic girl unfolds and as more and more of the attitudes and feelings of her parents, her sister, and her brother are presented, it becomes increasingly plausible that the particular constellations within the family and the interactions between the members of that family were important factors in the genesis of the girl's madness, and also that the girl's madness cannot be understood properly without understanding the family inter-relationships.

This theme of the book is well developed, yet it seems that understanding of the family inter-relationships does not explain everything. Why had the girl become 'the patient' and not any of the other members of the family? Dr Esterson leaves this question unanswered.

Undoubtedly, both psychiatrists and general practitioners can learn from Dr Esterson's

approach to schizophrenia, incomplete though the approach is. Understanding of the family setting, joint interviews and observation of the interactions of the members of the family, relief of family pressures, and 'being on the side of the patient', are most valuable aids to diagnosis and treatment of emotional and mental disorders.

This much can be learnt from the book. But the book has a second part, in which Dr Esterson expounds his philosophical and political views. He is trying very hard to correlate his medical (psychiatric) theories with what he calls the 'dialectical truth', which is something akin to what George Orwell has called 'double think'. This second part of the book consists of a good deal of name calling ('fascists', 'capitalists') interlaced with quotations of Chairman Mao's platitudes and Dr Esterson's views of the world in general. As 'dialectical truth' means accepting anything as truth that suits the political or other purposes of the dialectician the question necessarily arises on reading part two of Dr Esterson's book, to what extent part one, the part dealing with the medical aspects of the girl's illness, has been tainted by the author's bias. This doubt diminishes the authority of the statement of the first part of the book.

This is rather a pity because the book is very much like the curate's egg, i.e. it is good in parts. Whether the reader would like to pay the price of a good farm egg for a tainted egg, though good in parts, must be left to his discretion.

**The tissues of the body.** W. E. LE GROS CLARK, F.R.S. Oxford. The Clarendon Press. 1971. Pp. 1+424. Price £3.25.

This popular textbook continues to be revised with regularity. Although the general practitioner does not have to remember the details of anatomy, he should keep himself abreast of the increasing knowledge of the basic sciences on which his diagnosis and treatment are founded. In this book he will find all that he wishes to know expressed in a lucid and interesting manner. A useful present for the son or daughter who are studying biology or medicine.

**Current problems in clinical virology.** First Edition. Edited by J. E. BANATVALA, M.A., M.D., M.R.C.Path., D.P.H., D.C.H. Edinburgh and London. Churchill Livingstone. 1971. Pp. 1+201. Price £2.50.

"It is no idle boast for us to say that we stand on a strategic pinnacle for the investigation of infectious diseases".

This quotation from William Pickles stands at the head of a chapter by Dr P. R. Grob on 'Virology in General Practice' contributed to this collection of brilliant essays by microbiologists and virologists. The book has been edited by Dr J. E. Banatvala, virologist to St Thomas's Hospital, who also writes an excellent paper on "Virus

**Infections During Pregnancy**."

Dr Grob shows us, and three excellent photographs help to prove his thesis, how a keen general practitioner who makes a good link with his public health laboratory can create, within his own surgery premises, the simple "virus hunting" apparatus which will enable samples of virus infected specimens to reach the laboratory in a state where isolation of the virus is frequently possible. Dr Grob also gives us a valuable table (pp. 126-127) describing clearly the clinical syndromes most frequently associated with the various virus and other infective organisms to be considered in the differential diagnosis. This will be well worth copying out for reference by anyone who cannot buy this book. The other essays cover a wide field of virology and include Dr A. N. Griffiths on "Viral Vaccines", and Dr C. E. D. Taylor on "The Use of the Virological Laboratory". Dr I. Phillips writes on "Gastroenteritis", and Dr P. G. Higgins deals with "Virus Infections of the Skin and Mucous Membranes", including some fine clinical photographs of lesions of many illnesses in this group, of which the skin lesions in foot and mouth disease are striking.

The whole book is orientated towards practical clinical readers, and all concerned are to be congratulated on this clear presentation of a subject of profound importance to all of us and to our children, as the chapter by Dr P. S. Gardner on "Acute Respiratory Virus Infections of Childhood", makes abundantly plain.

This little volume is probably the most valuable contribution to date for the general practitioner, who is usually the clinician first faced with the complex task of sorting out virus infections, both in epidemic form or as isolated diseases such as the herpetic manifestations of cell infections with virulent viruses. If we sometimes complain about the frequency with which the laboratory reports negative findings, this well-bound and well-printed book will prove a most valuable and also an inexpensive investment.

**Preventive medicine, community health and social services.** Second edition. J. B. MEREDITH DAVIES, M.D., D.P.H. London: Bailliere, Tindall and Cassell Ltd. 1971. Pp. 2+331. Price £1.75.

This is essentially a reference book, and should therefore be judged on the efficiency of the index as a guide to the information between the covers. Literary style is not important in this instance, though Dr Meredith Davies has managed to make the factual information readable and interesting. The index is clear, concise and accurate, though one exception is information about the Guthrie test which is wrongly indexed.

The reviewer has judged the content by thinking of those problems which have confronted him during the week:

Information about the availability of anti-D

serum in rhesus incompatibility; whether a traveller to India could be given smallpox vaccine and cholera vaccine on the same day; and what social worker could help a mother of three children with an ineffectual husband who was depressed and disorganized after a house removal to a new redevelopment area.

He could not find the answers to the first two questions in the book, and it appeared that possibly the mental health officer could help solve the third problem. The almost complete absence of information about general dental services seemed a strange omission. All the answers cannot be contained in one volume, however, and this is a useful reference book for medical students and doctors, social workers and health visitors.

**Bedside diagnosis.** Ninth edition. CHARLES SEWARD, M.D., F.R.C.P. Edinburgh and London. Churchill Livingstone. 1971. Pp. vii+537. Price £3.00.

This fully revised edition of Dr Charles Seward's well known and widely translated book has received editorial assistance from Dr David Mattingly and, in its specialized aspects, from several of Dr Seward's colleagues. Lord Cohen of Birkenhead in a foreword congratulates Dr Seward on the results of his labours, and many who have seen previous editions will wish to add their thanks for this fresh new text. Dr G. H. Hall has rewritten the chapter on 'Drugs Considered as Causes of Symptoms', and has also contributed a short chapter on 'Causes of Coma'.

The West Country is rightly proud of this book, with its cultured but ever modest approach to the arts of diagnosis; yet the spirit of Sir James Mackenzie, general practitioner and consultant, whose influence has so fully permeated Dr Seward's teaching, still shines out from these pages. We can but hope that future editions, with increasing editorial dilution will not dim this essential quality.

Under the, as yet, unfamiliar imprint of Churchill Livingstone lies a long association, gratefully acknowledged by the author, with the great publishing firm of E. & S. Livingstone. This book is very well produced, and is still easy on the pocket, both to carry and to buy.

**Seventh symposium on advanced medicine.** Edited by IAN A. D. BOUCHIER, M.D., F.R.C.P. London. Pitman Medical Publishing. 1971. Pp. 345. Price £3.00.

Doctors will be grateful for the speed with which the papers from this distinguished symposium have been made available at moderate cost in this paperback edition. They were given at The Royal College of Physicians of London in February of this year, and each of the 32 papers in this Seventh Symposium is a distinguished contribution to a series which follows the pattern of earlier conferences. The 'recent advances' emphasized on