

suffer from the psychological difficulties enumerated in the book. Fatigue following prolonged states of tension, excitement or frustration, is probably the commonest psychological determinant of an attack. As pointed out in the book, it can be a learned reflex response to situations and stimuli which have provoked previous attacks.

The final paragraph expresses the hope—'If this booklet has taught you to stop worrying about "allergies" then it has fulfilled its task'. The reviewer is, himself, allergic and hopes that he does not worry too much about it, but it is feared he may start to do so if his patients were to ask him to explain parts of this book.

The booklet has no index.

Legal abortion. The English experience. First edition. ANTHONY HORDERN, M.D., F.R.C.P., M.R.C.P., D.P.M. Oxford. Pergamon Press Ltd. 1971. Pp. v+289. Price £3.75.

This publication written by a consultant psychiatrist at a London teaching hospital reminds us immediately of the intense interest in the subject of abortion in this country in recent years.

The author has collected a mammoth list of 498 references, of which over 300 date from the years 1969 and 1970. But mercifully, the pace may even now be slackening, as of the 300 odd, 1970 provided only just over a third. Perhaps we are thinking more and writing less? The book gives a comprehensive survey of the situation leading up to and since the passing of the abortion Act in 1968.

The early chapters cover the attitudes and customs which lay behind the demand for clarification of the law and the broadening of its scope. These are followed by a chapter on the various methods of termination of pregnancy and the main part of the book is devoted to an account in considerable detail of the way the Act has affected society and its successes and failure, much of it quoted direct from the lay press.

There is a departure from the scope suggested in the title by the inclusion of a 50-page chapter on abortion problems in other countries, but this makes interesting reading and well illustrates the fact that however handled the unwanted pregnancy poses its problems.

As is to be expected in a work with so many references, the opinion of others are given ample scope, but one wishes the author had treated us to more of his own views with their foundation in his wide clinical experience. The book will be useful to doctors in a general way and for its lavish bibliography, but its main appeal will be to those "looking in from the outside", as it were, and to legislators and social workers in countries where new laws on abortion are under consideration.

Obstetrics for the family doctor. Second edition. DAVID BROWN, F.R.C.O.G. London. Pitman Medical Publishing. 1971. Pp. i + 179. Price: £1.25.

This is a paperback second edition of David Brown's book on obstetrics for the general practitioner. At Chelmsford he has one of the best postgraduate obstetric educational centres in the country. He is very well aware of general-practitioner needs. His annual report on the obstetrics of his area shows that over 54 per cent of all deliveries in the area are under general-practitioner care, either in the home or in general-practitioner units, and the proportion is rising.

This book makes no attempt to be a textbook of obstetrics. On the contrary it is concise and dogmatic, giving the general practitioner a sound and feasible method of dealing with whatever problem presents. There may be other methods which would be equally good, but the follower of David Brown will know at least one which will suffice. There is one new chapter on The Postnatal Examination; the old have been carefully revised and brought up to date regarding new developments since the first edition was published in 1966. It is an excellent guide for the family doctor who wishes to look after his own maternity cases or those of his group, to deal with them himself as far as he is able and to call for specialist assistance at the appropriate time.

Visits to doctors. First edition. K. J. MANN, M.D., M.R.C.P., D.T.M.H., JACK H. MEDALIE, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc., M.P.H., ELINOR LIEBER, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., J. J. GROEN, M.D. AND LOUIS GUTTMAN, Ph.D. Israel. Published by the Jerusalem Academic Press. 1971. Pp. 7+335. Price £0.00.

This book is a detailed report on the work done in a health centre in a new suburb of Jerusalem. The patients comprised a large number of immigrants in a developing community. The doctors providing general-practitioner care worked in teams of two and were supported by an average of one and a half nurses per doctor and a changing population of supporting workers, including at times a caseworker, a clinical psychologist and a statistician. The medical work was under the direction of Dr Medalie who is chairman and professor of family medicine at Tel Aviv University Medical School. The principal objectives of the centre were to provide personal medical care centred on the family. Continuity of care was recognized as being important and was one of the reasons for the structure of the two-doctor team. The objective, as in this country today, was to provide physical, psychological and social medicine simultaneously. Subjects like family planning were specifically mentioned as being within the rôle of these doctors. The work-load for the individual physicians was of the order of 300-400 families, but in addition they did a substantial

amount of routine examination of the healthy and practical preventive medicine.

The main body of the book consists of tables of data classifying for example the adults and children attending by their various variables. The presenting symptoms are similarly analysed and correlations made where possible with various demographic and social variables. The significance of some of these findings are further discussed and, for example, it is shown that the data here presented do not support the hypothesis that there was a group of doctor-prone patients over a period of three or more years. Interesting profiles of high contact adults are drawn up and the observations of non-disease-orientated complaints are particularly well discussed.

This is not a book that can be easily read, but it is an extremely useful reference work and a model of its kind. It is particularly encouraging to see a number of doctors who have obviously had a specialist training and hospital orientation changing their orientation in making important contributions to the literature of general practice. It is significant that this should come in Israel where there is other evidence that this country is reconsidering its whole structure of medical care at the present time.

Much of the data presented here is directly comparable with a number of recent reports from British general practice. The book would have been even more valuable if appropriate comparisons had been mentioned and discussed.

Playing and reality. First edition. D. W. WINNICOTT, F.R.C.P. London. Tavistock Publications. 1971. Pp. 1+169. Price £2.10.

The late Dr Winnicott's fame rests on his unique approach to childhood development and childhood illness. He was a skilled paediatrician and an equally skilled psychoanalyst, who was able to combine an understanding of healthy and sick children from both the traditional medical and from the wider psychological points of view. One of his most important contributions to the development of man were his concepts of the transitional stage of development and of the transitional object, which denote areas of experiencing both inner and external reality.

This book enlarges and extends his ideas in this field. The transitional stage of the development lies between the archaic stage of the very young baby when he is unable to distinguish between "self" and "other", and the later stage when the child is able to delineate realistically a boundary between himself and the outer world. Transitional objects, i.e. such playthings as a rag doll, a piece of cloth, a certain pillow cover that take on specific rôles at certain ages, are deeply loved and cuddled, yet at the same time are mutilated, and survive both treatments. Remnants of this development stage remain in all human

beings and are related to the use that is made of fantasizing in life. It is also related to playing, one of the most important activities of children (and continued into later life), which is fundamental to the formation of relationships in general, of creativeness, and the sense of identity. Winnicott also deals in the book with the search for identity and power that goes on within the adolescent, and he tries to define the rôle of the adult (and thus education) has to play in the struggles of the adolescent.

These contributions are of great importance for the understanding of both children and adolescents; they also touch many aspects of adult neurosis. Some of the chapters of the book are reprints of papers or lectures, and this—at least to the reviewer—disturbs the thread of underlying thought. The book is not easy to read for those who are not familiar with contemporary psychoanalytic thought, because psychoanalytic terminology often uses ordinary English words as technical terms with specific meanings. Unless a reader is aware of this he will be at sea. Nevertheless, the inclusion of fascinating case reports and Dr Winnicott's lucid language and style make the book a pleasure to read. This last literary gift of a great man should be read by all doctors whose interests range beyond their routine work, who want to gain a deeper understanding of the prime sources of human activities in health and diseases, and who feel that traditional medicine and psychiatry do not provide complete answers to the many questions raised by the puzzles of illness and human development.

Psychological medicine in family practice. A. R. K. MITCHELL, M.B., CH.B., M.R.C.P.E., D.P.M. London. Baillière Tindall. 1971. Price £1.80.

This book is based on a tape-recorded series of talks made for the Medical Recording Service of the Royal College of General Practitioners. In 21 lively chapters Dr Mitchell ranges over most of the psychiatric problems that confront the young family doctor, for whom the book is primarily intended, though it will also be useful to medical students, nurses and social workers.

Dr Mitchell's approach is holistic and eclectic; he presents all current theories of mental illness and most treatments impartially though not uncritically, and he emphasizes the importance of the doctor's use of himself and his involvement as a therapeutic tool.

This quite short book covers an enormous canvas, and is necessarily condensed, but to offset this Dr Mitchell gives at the end of each chapter excellent suggestions for further reading.

Particularly good are the chapters on the misuses of children, and on being responsible, though one regrets that the author, having said that "opinion is divided as to whether psychopaths are mad or bad, or both" does not venture his own definition of a psychopath.