

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.