

Similarly the section on medicine and society is most valuable. Although much has been published before, this section pulls together a number of threads in a useful way.

The final section on the practice may well for established general practitioners be the easiest. It contains the least original material because the subject of practice organisation has been covered in relatively more detail during the last few years. The main new theme developed here is the importance of audits.

The presentation of this book leaves something to be desired. The style is somewhat heavy; the presentation ponderous in places. Analysed is spelt with a 'z', many of the paragraphs contain 20 to 30 lines of text, and the book is printed in 9 point typeface. These are perhaps points that could be considered in the next edition—which seems inevitable.

This is a major work. It follows in direct line from earlier attempts to define the content of general practice but the pioneering work of Professor McWhinney could well have been more clearly acknowledged. It will be read all over the world and foreign editions may well appear. This is the book of the year for general practice and can be confidently recommended to every doctor who will in any way be concerned with general practice in the future.

(See *Editorial and advertisement*).

Gynaecology in General Practice (1972). Pp. 120. London: British Medical Association. Price: £1.00 (\$3.00).

This small book consists of a series of papers previously published in 1971 in the *British Medical Journal*. They are presented as 17 chapters, two of whom are written by general practitioners. The first of these, by Dr J. A. Henderson, describes gynaecological examination equipment in the surgery clearly and simply. He stresses his opinion that cervical erosions and contraception, including the fitting of intra-uterine devices, should normally be part of general practice. The final chapter on exfoliative cytology in general practice also emphasises groups at special risk and the role of the general practitioner both in arranging these smears and being responsible for their follow-up.

The remaining chapters are all written by specialists in their own fields and are particularly well chosen, being relevant to modern general practice. Most of the common day-to-day problems such as backache, pregnancy diagnosis, menopause, dysmenorrhoea have been covered.

Dr Ware, the editor of the *British Medical Journal*, is to be congratulated on his editing, as the headings are clear, and add to the clarity of presentation. A great deal has been compressed into 120 pages, and this book can be strongly recommended. Clinical gynaecology is looming ever larger in general practice and it is useful to have published an up-to-date and concise guide.

Lifeline Telephone Service for the Elderly—an account of a pilot project in Hull. Peter Gregory & Michael Young. A National Innovations Centre Booklet. Pp. 26. Price: 60p.

The Hull Corporation is unique in operating a telephone system outside the GPO monopoly. Its Welfare Department has for several years run a special scheme of reduced rental, with 300 free calls per year, for poor and housebound old people. Hull therefore selected itself for this pilot project to examine the effects of providing a free telephone service for 100 old people of restricted mobility, in most cases living alone.

The report is an interesting and entertaining document, answering eight key questions the investigators set themselves. The answers obtained were not always what one might expect. For instance, the telephone apparently did not result in more calls for doctors than before.

The authors are to be commended in writing a report from which the reader can emerge with a clear grasp of the findings, and respected for urging caution against treating their results as conclusive. Yet, they rightly feel able to make recommendations, and these are of value to all those concerned with The Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act of 1970 which makes the provision of a telephone service mandatory, and indeed a service of high priority. The Hull findings show that this provision is fully justifiable in a civilised State, and this report will be of interest to all general practitioners, district nurses, health visitors, and staff in welfare departments personnel.

The Shadowless Lamp: Memoirs of an R.A.M.C. Surgeon. Richard Hunt (1971). Pp. 134. London: William Kimber. Price: £2.50.

This, says the author, is not an autobiography but rather a series of anecdotes. Nevertheless it is difficult to write of our experiences in life without revealing something about ourselves. Brigadier Hunt is an exceptionally talented writer and able to express himself with great clarity. He stands out from the pages of this book as a man who has enjoyed his chosen profession and therefore succeeded in it. India, where he was born and spent his early years, is his first love and his reminiscences of life there in military cantonments before and during the first years of the Second World War have recalled to your reviewer recollections of the smells and sounds and dust of that strange yet lovable country. Brigadier Hunt's service life took him to most of the places to which an RAMC officer was sent. Being in the East he did not see much fighting, although he mentions the Burma campaign. There are odd and entertaining anecdotes in plenty, and more excitement seems to have fallen his lot than is usual in the life of a soldier-surgeon; or is it that things befall those with a mind prepared? Trained

as an observer and lover of nature, an artist in watercolours, and as a practising surgeon nothing seems to have escaped the watchful eye of the writer. Here is a book that is a pleasure to read.

Practical Paediatric Problems. Third edition. Hutchinson, J. H. (1971). Pp. 640+xv. London: Lloyd Luke. Price: £3.50.

Part of the fascination of medicine stems from the contrary abilities it demands—the ability, on the one hand, to bring highly specific and detailed knowledge to the solution of a problem; on the other, the ability to take a wider view of the problem in the total context of the patient's personality and environment. Outside general practice this contrast is nowhere highlighted better than in paediatrics. For while paediatrics covers the whole field of medicine, it simultaneously demands a precision of assessment greater than any other specialty (inevitably so—since the child is less tolerant of disequilibrium than the adult).

Professor Hutchinson's *Practical Paediatric Problems*, the third edition of which has now appeared, is a valuable contribution to the literature of child health—precisely because it provides, in easily accessible form, much of the basic factual material needed by the child's doctor. Both the paediatric registrar in hospital, and the general practitioner outside it, will find here a solid, well presented, foundation on which to build.

No less than a third of the book is devoted to neonatal problems—low birth weight, anoxia, injuries, neonatal jaundice, haemorrhage, and infection—emphasising the relatively hazardous character of this period of life. These are all valuable chapters. Less satisfactory is the chapter

on “failure to thrive in infancy”—isolating as it does the child's growth in the first year. Many readers will feel that there are other, more convenient, ways of approaching the aetiological spectrum; and the starting point that “marasmus . . . exists when an infant is below 75 per cent of the expected weight for his age” either makes nonsense of the concept of percentile spectre of normality, or is itself of little meaning.

On neonatal jaundice, Professor Hutchinson is at once readable and useful. The possibilities of preventing haemolytic disease (by the use of Rh (D) immunisation, and by the use of amniocentesis in non-immunised Rh negative mothers), coupled with the advantages of managing affected neonates in regional centres, requires that all doctors engaged in obstetrical and child care should clearly understand the factors involved. Here the book is most valuable.

The same, too, is true of the sections on inborn errors of metabolism, on clotting disorders, and on endocrine disturbance—to mention but three of the more difficult areas of contemporary paediatrics. All contain valuable summaries which provide jumping off points for further reading.

The embryo paediatrician and the general practitioner will, by no means, find here a discussion of all the problems in which perforce they must be interested. Mental handicap receives a bare (but useful) 17 pages; and behaviour disturbances in children even less. Neither the epidemiology of childhood nor the paediatrics of education is considered. This is, in short, a book concerned with diseases of childhood, not with child health, as such it is well worthy of a place on the bookshelf.

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