

“talking treatment”—the patient being the one who should talk. On this basis and surely the right one, all general practitioners are psychotherapists. The only point at issue is the extent to which our amateur talents (our training in organic medicine being largely irrelevant here) can be reinforced by training. Written instruction in psychotherapeutic techniques is very sparse, perhaps because psychiatrists know better than most authors the gulf there can be between what is said and what is understood. Here Dr Atkin has been brave enough to cast his bread upon the waters and we are indeed most grateful for it.

The book is written by a psychiatrist and some chapters deal with problems that are of concern mainly in hospital. Such are the chapters on art therapy, the psychology of shock therapies and leucotomy, recovery rates in schizophrenia, and difficult delusions. Several chapters however on the work of psychotherapy do give real help to the practitioner.

The disability of the specialist—one patient at one time—can in places be contracted with the opportunities available to the general practitioner by virtue of his continuing relationship with all the family. Here too extra discussions are our justification and our responsibility. Dr Atkins has resisted the temptation to discuss transferences and counter-transferences in this book but we must hope he will succumb on some other occasion, because this is so much a part of general practice that surely to license doctors without their understanding these matters is as blind as equipping them with only half the pharmacopoeia.

Outlines of General Practice. The College of General Practitioners Midland Faculty. Edited by A. J. LAIDLAW, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., L.R.F.P.S. Third edition. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1963. Pp. iv + 71. Price 10s.

Much is heard nowadays about the need for medical students and young doctors embarking on a career in general practice to have adequate instruction in practice organization and methods, and on the social services of the country, particularly as they affect general practice. Very little has been written about the multitude of problems of administration and organization that faces a general practitioner, and little about the relationship of the general practitioner with the local authority health services. The appearance of the third edition of this booklet is, therefore, welcome.

As the editor says in the introduction, this booklet consists of notes which should help to guide teachers of medical students, general practitioners with assistants, and trainees under the Trainee Practitioner Scheme. It does not pretend to contain the information that one could expect in a textbook, and, on the other hand, it contains in some sections more than a bare indication of the subjects that should be considered. As a result, there is a certain unevenness in the work. For instance, two pages are devoted to the fees that may be charged in police cases,

but only two lines to the relationship of general practitioners with coroners. Nevertheless, all the non-clinical subjects affecting general practitioners are mentioned, and an excellent bibliography guides the reader to further information. It must be remembered that the booklet is designed as a guide, and therefore lists such as the contents of a doctor's bag are no more than a suggestion, and should not be considered authoritative. Each trainer or teacher will have his own views on this type of subject.

This booklet should continue to be useful to students and young doctors embarking on general practice, and to those of us who attempt to guide them in their careers. It is especially pleasing to note that the profits of this edition will go to the College Appeal Fund.

The Environment of Medical Practice. R. B. ROBINS, M.D. Chicago. Year Book Medical Publishers, Inc. 1963. Pp. v + 357. Price 49s.

The House of Delegates of the American Medical Association in June 1961 suggested that medical schools "should develop and present a required course in ethics and socio-economic principles, and that each state board of medical examiners include questions on ethics and proper socio-economic practices in all examinations for license".

This small volume is a collection of contributions from eminent American physicians with special knowledge of the various fields including, The Human Side of Medicine, The Physician's Place in Public Affairs, Relations with the Medicolegal Officer, with the Health Department. The physician's relations with the paramedical services, voluntary health agencies, with the Government, and with health insurance bodies, are followed by an essay on economics, and lastly by one on ethics.

Essays are on the whole factual, to the point of being dry, and without obvious political bias—although this does occasionally creep in—"its [private health insurance] continued expansion and improvement will assist materially in the preservation of all private enterprise in America from socialistic envelopment".

The editor has been entirely successful in this object of assembling basic background material in the medico-social field, and the volume should prove essential both to the American medical student and to the student of America elsewhere.

The work is well produced, printed on good quality paper, easy to read and to handle as a reference manual. A minor criticism is that despite the editors' intentions and the translators' clarity of language on which they are to be congratulated, the interpretation is not clear and there are minor variations from common use of technical terms, for example the phrase "differential-diagnostic notes". To the family doctor interested in applying modern scientific medicine in his daily work possession of this book will prove a persisting stimulus, for, in the editors' words: "It seemed to us that the only possible way to lighten the burden of, and provide a useful guide for, the doctor and clinical worker was to concentrate on what is important and to explain the indications for certain investigations and their correct application".