BOOK REVIEWS

The Well Child's Problems: Management in the First Six Years. By GORDON D. JENSEN. (Pp. 312; 13 figures. 64s.) Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers; London: Lloyd-Luke. 1963.

A Hippocratic aphorism states: 'Most diseases of children come to a crisis within 40 days, some within seven months, some within seven years, and others when they come to maturity; but those which shall continue longer, and neither be dissolved when they come to adolescence do continue so while they live.' Has this any relevance to a statement in this new book that 'permanent health problems arising out of toilet training lead Americans to spend many millions of dollars every year on laxatives, indigestion pills, colonic irrigations and other works of quack practitioners—and that psychogenic megacolon is one of the most severe disturbances in the health area'!?

This book attempts to explain how the careful study of the healthy infant and child, coupled with skills and common sense in the daily care and management, may prevent or remedy the 'well child's problems'. It would be interesting to have a review of the book by an intelligent Victorian or Edwardian mother who reared her 10 children to the maximum of their health and abilities: she would have concurred with much that Dr. Jensen has written, with frequent side remarks such as 'of course' and 'I could have told you so'. However, we now have a book of nearly 300 pages to relate the story. It is interesting and light reading and, no doubt, the sales of the book will be all the greater because it could interest doctors, psychiatric social workers, educational psychologists, and social workers and, in some fashion, carries that sub-mystical phraseology that undoubtedly attracts the modern knowledge hunters among the lay public. So it adds one more American-generated emulsion of 'know-how' in trying to keep in with Nature's plan for the welfare of mankind commencing on square one.

Although, scattered in historical literature, we find many startling examples of magnificent erudition in matters concerning growth, development, maturity, behaviour, mental health, and even on 'difficult children' it is now sometimes assumed that all our present knowledge stems from Arnold Gesell since about 1940. Undoubtedly, Gesell initiated new attitudes in the study of well children and set good patterns for future developmental research. From this Jensen has taken his main lead and followed up with a good clear account of the realities of the affairs of parents and their children. Any doctor who reads this book will advance his ideas on child health and will certainly be all the more capable

of answering, by discussion, some of the startling questions that are only too likely to be brought forward by many inquiring parents in these enlightened days of paediatrics with a health slant.

Answering Parents' Questions. By WILLIAM G. CROOK. (Pp. xvi + 280; illustrated. \$9.50.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1963.

'The duty of the Doctor is to give explanation and advice.' Sir James Spence never tired of emphasizing the importance of this, and it is largely with this precept in mind that Dr. Crook has written this book. It is aimed at aiding the doctor in giving explanations and advice to parents on many problems concerned with children and also to give the busy paediatrician time by suggesting mimeographed sheets and other literature that can be given to parents to read for themselves.

The book is divided into two parts: (1) The problem and a method of solving it, and (2) materials and sources. Part 1 will not be of much interest to doctors in this country unless they have ready access to the many American publications quoted, it also is largely a reflection of one man's concept of 'Office' paediatric practice in the U.S.A. Part 2 on the other hand contains a bag of more varied interest. Much of it consists of short explanatory leaflets dealing with common problems in children and many of these are excellent, containing sound advice that would accord largely with that given in this country.

The final series of short articles on allergy would not all find ready acceptance over here, but some of the points raised would merit further consideration.

British parents have not seemed so keen on health education as Americans in the past, but this is becoming less true now and with suitable British orientation many of these advice leaflets could fulfil a need.

In short, a rather unusual book not without humour and in parts stimulating, worth at least a second look.

L'Épiphysiolyse de la Hanche. By PIERRE LACROIX. (Pp. 130; 47 figures. 280 Fr.) Brussels: Editions Arsacia; Paris: Masson et Cie. 1963.

The author of this monograph is already known for a description of the pathological anatomy of slipped upper femoral epiphysis, which he published in 1951. This account, supported by another example obtained at an operation for prosthetic replacement of the femoral head, reappears in the present work. The chapter on