BOOK REVIEWS

Advice to the Expectant Mother. By F. J. Browne and J. C. McClure Browne. (Pp. 46+Index. Is.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone. This excellent little pamphlet is now brought out in its eleventh edition and remains what it has always been, a well written and very useful aid to mothers who are about to have their first baby.

The neonatal and antenatal paediatric advice is up-to-date in conception and description, and it might well be distributed to all mothers by a benevolent Welfare State.


This small paper-covered book, by a medical grandmother sets out to inform a young expectant mother, living in this country, of what might be called the routine happenings she may anticipate as regards the course of pregnancy and labour, antenatal care, care in hospital, and postnatal care, as well as the normal development and behaviour of her infant. In addition, it provides practical advice on measures needed for her own health and on infant and child care. A considerable part of the book is factual, and the teaching provided would meet with the approval of most paediatricians, in general if not in every detail, since opinions inevitably differ. In the reviewer's opinion it is a book which would be appreciated by very many young women experiencing their first pregnancy.


This represents a budget on school health. The gains are obvious and there is clearly a growing balance on the credit side. Heights and weights for corresponding ages continue to creep up for both sexes and adult stature is reached at an earlier age than formerly. In October, 1955, nearly half the children in State schools were taking school dinners and 85% were having school milk. Unfortunately it is the children classed as 'unsatisfactory' from the physical standpoint that often have neither the dinners nor the milk. A paragraph on 'obesity' indicates that the nutritional problems of today are different from 50 years ago! Although special investigations in certain areas are reported there is not enough research nor of the critical approach to remaining problems in the school health field. There are several pages on postural defects and remedial work but no hint that some of these 'defects' may be physiological variants of growth for which no treatment is necessary. A control series would soon settle whether this statement is true or not, and according to tables on page 174 more children with postural defect were 'observed' than 'treated' so that the material is presumably available. It is also a matter of some concern that less than half the children examined on entering school have a 'general condition' classified as 'good', the other half being 'fair' and about 2% 'poor'.


A man went to church. He said the parson preached on sin. When asked what the parson said, he replied: 'I don't know, but he was agin' it.' The author of this book is agin' lying.

The main thesis of the book is acceptable—that parents and educators would do well to understand why a child lies instead of blindly reacting. It seems that adults get het up by children's lies, and give 'correction exemplaire, à main nue ou, armée d'un fouet, d'une cravache, d'une ceinture . . .', and sadism infinitely multiplies the resources of the imagination.

Unfortunately the author has no understanding to give. Instead he classifies the various kinds and degrees of lying.

The author has been untouched by the discoveries of the past 50 years which revolve round the work of Freud and the study of the unconscious and of the repressed unconscious, and this very interesting subject is therefore left where it was, with parents and educators still getting het up, knowing neither why the children lie nor why they are agin' it.

The book has no value, therefore, except as an illustration of the futility of writing on psychology in the second half of this century without an understanding of the unconscious.


The 13 members of the study group were convened from Europe, North and South America, India, Ceylon, the Philippines and Africa, and evidently found that the problems of undergraduate and postgraduate paediatric education were so diverse in their various countries that agreement could only be reached in broad generalizations. There are few detailed recommendations, although it was agreed that paediatrics could not be adequately covered in less than 300 hours, and that approximately one-quarter of the clinical period in the student curriculum should be devoted to this subject. The report may prove a help to those attempting to stake a claim for paediatrics as a new undergraduate and postgraduate discipline, but is too nebulous to advance materially paediatric education where this is already established.