

stack of reprints. They would have done better to have sorted out their ideas, which are not super-abundant, into an orderly arrangement, developing them and illustrating them with supporting evidence. We might then have had a very acceptable book of, optimally, about 200 pages. Much of what is here offered on the subject of the psychology of suicide is not very helpful, e.g. the alarmingly elaborate and neologistic classification. However, there are factual reports, forensic discussions and other articles that stand out as of real value. The suicidologist will want to have the volume.

Even experienced psychologists find it difficult to think coolly about death and suicide. All the hobgoblins that haunt the minds of elderly Californian rentiers squeak and gibber in these pages: one's own death is unimaginable; suicide may be 'murder in the 18th degree'; when it occurs it is uncanny, incredible, inexplicable, hopeless, heartless, unrealistic, a blow intended to be felt by relatives, friends and physicians; suicide is now the leading cause of unnecessary and stigmatizing deaths; and more of the like. Let us be clear about just a few elementary ideas. If a suicidal death is stigmatizing, this is a fault of the culture in which it occurs. Everybody has to go through the business of dying some time, and should be at liberty to choose the time and the death he would like. No deaths are 'unnecessary', though some are premature. 'If it be now, 'tis not to come—if it be not to come, it will be now—if it be not now, yet it will come—the readiness is all.'

ELIOT SLATER.

Mental Health and Work Organizations. Edited by ALAN McLEAN. Rand McNally & Co., Chicago. 1970. Pp. 322. Price \$5.75.

This is a summary of a series of conferences on occupational mental health held under the auspices of the Department of Psychiatry of Cornell University between 1967 and 1969.

Attention is mainly concentrated on the psychological effects of occupational stress and on the converse, the effects of psychological disorder on work capacity. In addition, the organization of occupational mental health services is dealt with as well as less closely related topics, such as Workmen's Law.

The ten chapters form a useful series of reviews. They provide information, comment and pointers to relevant literature on topics that are not brought to the psychiatrist's attention with the frequency their practical importance justifies. As critical studies,

however, they are very disappointing. The writing is discursive and repetitive. Crucial issues are evaded or drowned in a sea of platitudes, and the attempts made, in the few open discussions reported, to get back to them are not followed up. The reader is therefore likely to be left uncertain and uneasy about such issues as the criteria of mental health, the role of the psychiatrist when conflicts of interest arise between patient and organization, and the feasibility of preventive programmes in the present state of knowledge.

D. ABRAHAMSON.

The Boys' and Girls' Book about Divorce: with an Introduction for Parents. By RICHARD A. GARDENER, M.D. Science House, Inc. 1970. Pp. 159. Price \$7.95.

Both my secretary, who is the mother of two teenage girls, and myself have read it carefully and we are left with a bitter taste. If, as one can assume, this book is written for 12- to 14-year-old highly intelligent and articulate children, probably brought up in an American cultural setting, one wonders why the interplay between absolute individuality of parent, on the one hand, and child, on the other, is not taken into account.

This 'literary computer' is not fully programmed. One could single out numerous examples; can one really expect the average youngster to ask himself or herself whether the bad things your mother says about your father are really true? (page 92).

The whole book imposes a strain on the child, and the only time one would perhaps be able to see a beneficial effect is if that book were read by the child together with an unbiased and experienced person like the author.

The presentation of the book is good if one approves of cartoon strips, which in this country have not yet quite caught on. It is an intelligent book and extremely useful for the child psychiatrist, the child guidance officer and the teacher, but we have serious doubts whether the average child can absorb its contents and be made to suppress the emotive loading in such a situation. Eight dollars is a considerable amount to be found out of pocket money!

G. C. HELLER.

Human Circadian Rhythms. By R. T. W. L. CONROY and J. N. MILLS, J. and A. Churchill. 1970. Pp. 236. Price £3.00.

It has long been known that there are pronounced circadian variations in body temperature and wake-