

dental facts in an acceptable manner. The chapter on the prevention and control of dental caries, which contains a table of the fluoride content in the various foodstuffs, should be of interest to all, especially those interested in the promotion of water fluoridation. It is extremely hard to single out any one chapter and state that it exceeds another.

Knowledge in the field of dentistry in public health has made great advances in the six years since the first edition was published. The first edition is most useful for the resource material which it contains, while the second edition has the very latest information in the field of dental public health written in a more understandable manner.

This volume is well organized and is highly recommended as a book which should be included in public health as well as individual libraries and read by those interested in the improvement of the dental health of the people.

CARL L. SEBELIUS

Should the Patient Know the Truth? A Response of Physicians, Nurses, Clergymen and Lawyers— Edited by Samuel Standard and Helmuth Nathan. New York: Springer Publishing Company (44 E. 23rd St.), 1955. 160 pp. Price, \$3.00, hard cover; \$2.00 soft cover.

This volume includes 23 short essays by physicians, nurses, clergymen, and lawyers on the problem of what patients should be told, primarily about approaching death. There are wide differences of opinion expressed covering the spectrum of those who would answer unconditionally "Yes," to those who would follow a pattern of telling the patient as little as possible.

Among the responses the reviewer was most moved by the chapter "The Magnificence of Understanding" by Ilse S. Wolff, R.N., mental health nursing consultant in the Connecticut State Department of Health. There is deep in-

sight in this essay. The writer points out that the temptation is great to answer patients' questions in a definite personal vein: "Anything which has to do so intimately with the universal human condition cannot fail to touch off responses tinged heavily with one's own emotions and deeds. . . . We may rationalize that the patient is unable to take it, that the shock would cause him to give up prematurely or to spend the time left to him in a constant depression. By reasoning and projecting in this way, we confuse identities. While reacting in self-protection by every means at our disposal, by diversion, evasion, denial, we may easily leave the patient in a virtual isolation, an aloneness in times of greatest need. . . . A differentiating line needs to be drawn between what I decide for myself and how I respond to the patient who definitely is not I. . . . In this light, the question, 'Should the patient know the truth?' changes to the challenge, 'Am I ready and willing to be with the patient on his last road, willing to accept his feelings, different as they might be from mine, willing to respect equally his wish to be told or to be spared?'"

The book deserves to be widely read.

REGINALD M. ATWATER

Delinquent Boys—The Culture of the Gang—By Albert K. Cohen. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1955. 202 pp. Price, \$3.50.

This book presents a well reasoned sociologic explanation for the delinquent and asocial behavior characteristic of the great number of neighborhood gangs that are currently so prevalent in all of our urban centers. The author is an assistant professor of sociology at Indiana University; has a Ph.D. from Harvard University; and has had experience working with juvenile delinquents at the Indiana Boys' School. He makes his point very well and it is regrettable that in the exposition of his main theme,

which is a general theory of subcultures to explain the subculture of the gang, he uses the technical jargon of the sociologist and psychologist to such an extent that it is only with difficulty and diligent perseverance that the average lay person or professional person of some other discipline can wade through it. Nevertheless, it is worth the perseverance and one emerges with the feeling that the author has verbalized some common sense concepts that the reader has felt all along to be true but has not quite crystallized in his own mind.

In effect, and somewhat oversimplified, Dr. Cohen says that the culture of the middle class "white collar" worker and that of the lower or laboring class have definite differences. When the teen-age male children of both these classes mingle in school and in the community they are all judged by the same standards, those of the middle class. Under these standards it is more difficult for the lower class children to attain recognition and as a result they lose status in the group and develop a feeling of inferiority and loss of self-respect. Therefore they develop a subculture of their own where behavior is judged by different standards—standards that are "traditionally symbolic of untrammled masculinity, which are renounced by middle-class culture because incompatible with its ends, but which are not without a certain aura of glamor and romance. For that matter, they (the untrammled masculine behavior of physical violence, sexual exploits, etc.) find their way into the respectable culture as well, but only in disciplined and attenuated forms, as in organized sports, in fantasy, and in make-believe games, or vicariously as in movies, television and comic books." Thus, the gang members regain respect and status in the eyes of their associates.

A brief, lucid, almost entertaining explanation of why female delinquency so rarely results in similar gang activi-

ties is included. This depicts the average girl as toeing the thin but rewarding line between sexual desirability and sexual accessibility.

An outstanding and it is felt very promising feature is the proposed sound and thoroughly controlled but expensive and time-consuming epidemiologic approach to finding solutions and methods of treatment and prevention of the problem of this delinquency. This approach if properly applied should result in considerable benefit even if the author's theory is incorrect. EDWARD PRESS

Textbook of Healthful Living—By Harold S. Diehl (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill (330 W. 42nd St.), 1955. 802 pp. Price, \$6.00.

There appeared in 1935 a new "Textbook of Healthful Living" written by Harold S. Diehl, M.D., of the University of Minnesota. This book, intended primarily as a college text, has been revised five times. The most recent edition has just been released.

This volume is unique in that it combines text with references to health films and film strips that are available from the McGraw-Hill Film Department. Each chapter is followed by discussion suggestions and reading references.

The wealth of statistical source data and historical notes should make this book a valuable reference for all professional public health workers. The text treats of many important problems of personal health and relates these problems to those of community health.

It would be difficult for the reviewer to select the outstanding chapter in this book as each is excellent. The one on mental health particularly attracted his attention, however, because of the extraordinary way the authors have presented narratives that tell a mental hygiene story in persuasive fashion.

A few features which seem undesirable may be readily explained by the fact that the book has undergone several