

and that the experts were agreed on such subjects as sterilization, abortion and artificial insemination; would not the case for incorporating these paramedical matters into the already existing maternity and health services, rather than vice versa, be overwhelming?

Marriage guidance deals primarily with the personal relationship of two people. It is true that there may be, and often is, a family in the background; but nevertheless it is the personal problems of two partners that are involved, and marriage guidance as such cannot be undertaken merely as part of a larger service for the family. This is not to say that secondary questions such as childlessness and family planning do not come into the picture—they do very often—but they are incidental to the main problem. This is recognized in the Denning Report, which recommends that grant-aid be made to voluntary organisations engaged in marriage guidance. Yet the reasons given in the broadsheet for rejecting the recommendations of the Report do not seem to be convincing; “marriage guidance has such an important function to perform that there would be serious objections to leaving it outside the Family Welfare Service”. What the serious objections are is not stated.

One may suggest finally that many couples, though willing that the State should ensure them a safe passage from the cradle to the grave, may prefer to keep their marriage relationships to themselves. This raises the larger question now under consideration by a Home Office committee, on what lines marriage guidance as a form of social service can be most advantageously developed. There is nothing in the broadsheet to indicate that this aspect of the question, namely, State interference in what is perhaps the most intimate personal relationship that exists, has been seriously taken into consideration.

¹ Final Report of the Committee on Procedure in Matrimonial Causes. Cmd. 7024. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1947.)

FOOD POISONING

Food Poisoning

Its Nature, History and Causation, Measures for its Prevention and Control. By Elliot B. Dewberry. Second edition. Pp. xii+246+24 plates. (London: Leonard Hill, Ltd., 1947.) 17s. 6d.

THE subject of food poisoning was once largely a series of disconnected observations and records of outbreaks; but during the last three decades the facts have been associated and the discrepancies and fallacies removed. For example, the old expression ‘ptomaine poisoning’ has been shown to be without meaning and entirely incorrect. Now it is possible to give a clear account of food poisoning, including the various causal agencies, the paths of infection and the reservoirs of the various bacteria responsible. In the first edition in 1943, the author of the book under notice gave a clearly written account of the subject, and the second edition has brought it up to date. The first edition dealt very inadequately with staphylococcus food poisoning; but this has now been remedied by the addition of a new, separate chapter of 22 pages on this subject which gives all the essential facts. An additional section (appendix I) on laboratory investigation of food poisoning cases is of

doubtful utility, as this very technical subject is mainly of interest to the laboratory worker, and for him the account is barely adequate and is available elsewhere.

There are five main types of food poisoning, namely, *Salmonella* infections, toxin outbreaks due to special staphylococci, botulism, poisoning from contamination of the food with poisonous metals and other chemicals, and food poisoning from the consumption of poisonous plants, toxic mushrooms and other fungi, and poisonous fish or shellfish. Each group is separately and adequately treated. Most space is devoted to *Salmonella* food poisoning, which used to be, and may still be, the commonest type in Great Britain, and this is well done. The important recent work on the increase of this type of food poisoning due to the great increase in the use of dried egg mixtures is not mentioned; but this was probably too recent for inclusion.

Botulism is described in great detail, although not more than four outbreaks have ever been recorded in Great Britain. Its deadly nature justifies the detail, for it is more prevalent in some other countries. Food so infected usually shows signs of spoilage, but not invariably. This fact is just mentioned but should have been more emphasized, and the factors explained which determine whether signs of spoilage are or are not present.

The other types of food poisoning are adequately discussed, and no important inaccuracies were detected and few omissions. Examples of the latter are that cadmium poisoning should have been included in the chapter on poisonous metals, the value of the coagulase test is not given in discussing *Staphylococcus* poisoning and that more types of *Clostridium botulinum* are known than those mentioned. These are all small points, and the author has obviously been diligent to keep his book up to date.

The book is frankly a compilation not written by one personally an authority on the subject, but he has included all the essentials, and the volume may be accepted as an adequate and reliable account of food poisoning in its various manifestations. It is attractively illustrated and well printed.

ORGANISATION, METEOROLOGY AND WEATHER PREDICTION

“Here is the Weather Forecast”

By E. G. Bilham. (Binnacle Books Series.) Pp. 220 (36 plates). (London: Golden Galley Press, Ltd., 1947.) 10s. 6d. net.

WEATHER and the causes of weather are not easy subjects for the writer who addresses himself to a mixed audience. If he aims at strict accuracy, the writing must abound in saving clauses and qualifications, and the result will be anything but a clear-cut picture. Should he largely leave out the qualifying phrases, then the end result will not correspond to reality. Mr. Bilham, in this book, does manage to avoid these two dangers, and gives a clear and highly authoritative account of the way in which weather forecasts are prepared.

The account of the organisation for collecting and distributing weather observations, warnings and forecasts is excellent, and there is much highly interesting information about upper-air measurements by *radiosonde* balloons and the war-time applications of radar to wind finding, and more recently to cloud observa-