Many curious differences between countries and between decades emerge, and many problems which need fuller investigation become visible. For instance, the general decrease in the death rates in all countries during the last fifty years has especially benefited females, and the ratio of male to female mortality in the most recent years is greater than unity in almost all countries for all age-groups: yet mortality is higher in Ireland for women aged 15 to 39, and in Scotland for women aged 15 to 34, than for men of the same ages. This phenomenon indicates the existence of a question whether the conditions of life are especially difficult for young women in these countries, or whether one disease (such as tuberculosis) is responsible for the higher total female mortality. To take another example arousing speculation, the total mortality rate for the elderly and aged in the Netherlands is exceptionally low, the main improvement having occurred since 1940. The changing trends in male and female mortality, and in the ratio of male to female mortality, are extremely interesting, and the remarkably high ratio in the younger age-groups in some countries is a further subject for speculation, though in certain cases the changes in this ratio are probably connected with war conditions, the direction of change in some countries indicates that there is no simple explanation but that fuller study is needed.

These are but a few of the many fascinating problems revealed by this excellent paper, and the more deeply one examines the Tables the more fully one becomes aware of their implications. The paper is to be recommended as not only worth studying as a competent and thoughtful presentation of a wealth of valuable information, but also as worth keeping as a reference book and as a guide to further investigation. L. STEIN

Hospital and Community. II. Hospital-Treated Sickness amongst the People of Ayrshire. 1950. The Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, London. Pp. x+55. 3s. 6d.

This is the report of a survey carried out as a sequel to a similar study made in Stirlingshire in 1947. Besides presenting a report of all types of treated sickness occurring in the course of one year among the inhabitants of Ayrshire, the findings of this survey are compared with those in the Stirlingshire survey. The aims of these studies were not only to make analyses of hospital patients, but also to obtain a broad picture of sickness in relation to the social background, the limitations and imperfections of hospital records for such a purpose being borne in mind by the investigators. The results are set out concisely in sections dealing with the total volume and types of sickness, the duration of stay in hospital, the results of treatment, and the disposal of patients. Variations due to geographical factors, age and sex differences, seasonal incidence, social class, and occupation are also discussed. In the chapter which compares the Ayrshire with the Stirlingshire findings, many similarities are brought out, one of the most striking being that in both counties one person in every seven received hospital care at least once during the year.

The value of surveys such as these cannot be stressed too highly; it is to be hoped that many others will be made, and that their results will be set out equally clearly and efficiently. If the data collected were somewhat extended, such records could make the greatest contribution to our knowledge of the effects of new therapy. L. STEIN

Stillbirths. Epidemiology and Social Significance. By IAN SUTHERLAND, M.A., D.Phil., F.S.S. Foreword by J. A. RYLE, M.D., F.R.C.P. 1949. Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, London. Pp. xii+94. 7s. 6d.

In this study of stillbirths and their epidemiology and social significance, Dr. Sutherland reviews the information available on the stillbirth rate in several countries with a rate rather lower than that obtaining in Great Britain, and has shown its connexion with the neo-natal rate. From this basis he proceeds to analyse statistically the medical causes of stillbirths for several periods in Scotland and in England and Wales, and such biological