Ten Sex Talks to Boys (10 and older); Ten Sex Talks to Girls (14 and older). By Irving Davids Steinhardt, M. D. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1914. \$1.00 each.

Doctor Steinhardt has given in these two books what he himself calls "talks" as they were originally planned for audiences of girls and boys. Both books are written in plain, simple language, frequently, however, not adapted to the needs or understanding of boys of ten and girls of fourteen. In fact, the greatest fault in these books lies in the author's attempt to cover too wide a range. The author should have published at least six separate books instead of two. Few of us would feel it advisable to put in the hands of boys or girls from 10 to 14 books dealing so extensively with the sex problems.

Doctor Steinhardt begins by presenting the detailed anatomy and physiology of the sex organs, illustrated not by diagrams, but by detailed drawings from nature. There follows the hygiene of adolescence, with an extended discussion of constipation and masturbation, admonishing the young people of the bad effects of masturbation, by stating that it "will cause a breakdown of the nervous system, and cause you to end your days in a mad-house, or send you to an early grave." Such statements are calculated to terrorize unnecessarily, without offering the young people any real help in breaking the bad habit.

Veneral diseases are referred to as "the most loathsome of all human ills that leave disgrace and suffering in their wake; diseases that can blight a person's life from the very minute of coming into the world until the leaving of it; diseases that may cause life-long suffering, and insanity; diseases that in their ravages affect the innocent just as severely as the guilty." The chapter on these diseases gives the "loathsome" details of syphilis even to its advanced later manifestations. As though this were not terrifying enough for our children, the author "makes a pathetic address to an unhappy little syphilitic baby." Still this is not harrowing enough, and the young people are shown a picture of a syphilitic baby which I am altogether sure never will be forgotten, making the doctor's admonition "don't let these talks make merely a temporary impression upon you" quite unnecessary.

Following this, Doctor Steinhardt gives us a

talk on sex ethics, emphasizing kissing, dressing, "bartering of sexual organs," dancing, flirting, etc. Much of this contains excellent advice for both boys and girls. Marriage is the next theme touched upon, both its dangers and its advantages. The author emphasizes the qualities which both boys and girls should look for in each other, even discussing at some length "the sexual relation in married life." He says:—

"Wives and husbands both have certain sexual rights which should be perfectly understood. Differences in sexual appetite must be adjusted to make a perfect union. A non-passionate wife, married to a very passionate husband, or the reverse, is liable to cause dissension, unless care and diplomacy are exercised by both. I advise moderation for the sake of their own health and happiness, and for the benefit of any offspring."

In a later talk the author deals with wifehood and motherhood, discussing the signs of pregnancy, the peculiar mental conditions of child-bearing women, and the necessity for medical attention. The doctor decides to "skip an interval—that of the birth of the child and what goes with it—and take up child-management." The closing talk deals with the signs of approaching menopause, with the various symptoms and necessary precautions.

When we think of the girl or boy of ten or fourteen reading all this, reading it alone, without the guiding wisdom of a parent or the sincere doctor himself, we are forced to the belief that Doctor Steinhardt has approached this subject with the attitude of the physician who is accustomed to consider the subject of sex enlightenment from the medical standpoint. What seems perfectly commonplace to him shocks inexperienced youth, and cannot fail to repel the experienced adult who, while accepting physical truths, still holds fast to the spiritual ideal.

These books contain much good material for parents, but they should not be placed in the hands of young people for whom the author states they are planned.

Bertha Chapman Cady.