

'fellow', 'female', 'fertility' is another nice sequence. Among the more legitimate short titles of degrees and diplomas is the FRCGP, thus demonstrating that the book has been brought up to date. It is a product of the United States of America.

Group practice. First edition. J. S. CLARKE, M.B., B.S. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone. 1971. Pp. 1+96. Price £1.50.

Group practice is no new thing. In the 1930s there were many such practices, but group practices in those days differed somewhat from those of today; they were something more than a large partnership group and originated in an endeavour to provide patients with specialist skills which were not obtainable within easy reach of the neighbourhood. Often these group practices were highly developed with skilful surgeons, physicians, obstetricians, otorhinolaryngologists and anaesthetists who staffed the local general practitioner hospital so well as to make it self sufficient. That was in the days of free enterprise. The advent of the National Health Service killed this type of practice and its members were forced either to relinquish their special interests or cease to provide general medical services for their patients. With the increasing complexity of medical and surgical techniques this can now be seen as having happened just in time. From then on for the next ten years though small partnerships became increasingly popular large partnerships languished. Talk of health centres was heard but little progress in this direction was made. During the last ten years, with financial encouragement from the government, practice grouping has again become fashionable, and health centre practice is beginning to flourish.

The pros and cons of group practice are still arguable and the best method of grouping is still debatable. In the book under review Dr J. S. Clarke describes how two moderate-sized practices in an urban area came together to form a single large partnership. Some doctors would define a group practice as one sharing duties and premises, but not bound by any particular agreement, each taking out of the practice what he earns. There is no blue print as to how a group practice should be organized. There are as many different systems as there are group practices. It is for this reason that Dr J. S. Clarke's book is so valuable. But it is more than just a description of a practice; it is a quite gripping story of one undergoing the pangs of reorganization and so well told as to make it curiously exciting. Having said this it must be confessed that there is nothing new in his organization, though everyone who reads his account will find useful tips and will become aware of the weak points in their own set up and gain something from the author's experience.

For some years now we have been conscious of the rumblings of our general-practitioner colleagues in the north-east and have been aware that whole cargoes of ideas as well as coals are drifting

south. Dr Clarke almost persuades us that it would be pleasant to practice in Tynemouth. We envy his partners. Throughout he pays tribute to the qualities of the team with whom he works and to himself takes little credit for the excellence of the result. In a book of such a high standard there is little to criticize. One important instrument in any partnership is a legal agreement. He makes no detailed mention of this although he is minutely explicit in his description of the duties of the partners. Some may envy the practice "push-off" book, the expulsion book in which are entered the names of patients and families whose presence on the practice list has become unbearable, a number estimated at five per cent of the practice population, quite a high figure. In less populous areas, the last resort of removing a patient from the list is only to inflict what is usually a failure of personal relations onto a friendly colleague; though it must be said that patients so transferred often present no further difficulties to the accepting doctor.

There is no index.

The alcoholic and the help he needs—Part I.

First edition. M. GLATT, M.D., M.R.C.P., D.P.M. Royston, Hertfordshire. Priory Press Ltd. 1970. Pp. xi+114. Price 50p.

This is Part I of a two volume work in which the first is designed to provide a basic understanding of the problem of alcoholism to both lay and professional readers, whereas Part II gives more detailed coverage including treatment and is therefore more suited to the latter group. The appearance of the book is both timely and welcome as there is an increasing interest and awareness of the problems and misery caused by this widespread disease, on the part of the government bodies, the medical profession, and the ancillary helping organizations.

As might be expected when it is from the pen of such a well-known expert, the book is authoritative and easy to read. The author defines the different types of alcoholism, and in classifying such, refers to the confusion of terminology in respect of the different degrees of the disease. His book is concerned with what he calls the 'gamma alcoholism' and the 'delta alcoholism' of Jellinek which he says are addictions in the pharmacological sense and could be considered to be diseases. To the lay reader such differentiation may cause confusion. Facts and figures are given about the incidence and prevalence of the disease and the author admits that much of this information is based on insufficient evidence for which there is need for more accurate data. The author feels that the general practitioner is often unaware of the early signs and symptoms of the condition and of the extent of the disease in the community. Perhaps he is not even sympathetic to the problem when it is recognized in the individual.

The reviewer felt that in this part of the book a definite omission by the author was to stress insufficiently the difficulty of getting the alcoholic to recognize that he suffers from the condition and

is in need of help. Many general practitioners are aware of alcoholism in their patients from the evidence presented by spouse or other member of the family, or from the pattern of sick absence from work. Nevertheless they find it difficult to establish contact with the sufferer or to get him to follow the advice which has been given. Perhaps Dr Glatt will discuss this problem in Part II of his book.

The chapters are logically set out and the effects of alcoholism in the different age groups, within the family, at work, on suicide and crime, and on the road accident rate, are all discussed. Part I concludes with two appendices containing useful addresses of helping organizations including a list of the still far too few hospital alcoholic units. There are suggestions of suitable books for further reading. Having enjoyed reading Part I and having learnt considerably from it, the reviewer looks forward to studying Part II.

A longitudinal study of the dietary of elderly women. B. R. STANTON and A. N. EXTON-SMITH. London. King Edward's Hospital Fund. 1970. Pp. 32. Price (40p 8s.).

This report describes the eating habits of some old people, initially 60 strong. It gives comparison with 22 survivors from this group 6½ years later.

No startling discoveries were made and the statistical results shown must be viewed with reserve because of the small numbers involved.

Vitamin C and the common cold. LINUS PAULING. San Francisco. W. H. Freeman & Co. 1970. Pp. 122. Price £0.80.

One thousand five hundred apples a day keep the doctor away, says Professor Pauling, thus resuscitating a controversy we had long thought dead. In fact, the author makes the corpse appear uncommon lively. He makes a statistical reappraisal of the older experiments, and quotes later ones, notably those of Stone and Régnier, and comes to the conclusion that even the older reports, with their doses in the region of 200 mg per day, showed statistically significant increase in resistance to common infections. The great point of his book, however, is that these doses are ridiculously small. A closely reasoned argument, palaeological and evolutionary, leads him to the conclusion that the daily intake of ascorbic acid necessary to maintain full health may even be in the region of 10,000 mg per day. He makes the telling point that the usual officially recommended minimum dose is that which will avoid scurvy—and interprets that as being merely enough to prevent a pre-mortal disease. He thinks that we should not placidly accept such a modest minimum.

Much work on this subject is going on in America, and we shall doubtless hear more of it. As ascorbic acid is apparently harmless even in monumental doses—in contrast to most household

remedies for the common cold—it may be that the most sensible thing to do would be to suck it ad nauseam. An interesting little book, this, and notable to one reader at least for a novel use on two occasions of that astonishing syntactical device, the American subjunctive. British readers had better become acquainted with this, *so that*—as the idiom has it—*they not be puzzled when they meet it*.

ABC of drug addiction. A collection of articles from "Community Health". John Wright and Son. 1971. Pp. 100. Price 80p.

Re-publishing articles which have already appeared in a number of magazines can only be justified by their high quality or topicality. This collection of papers from 1969 certainly fits the topicality though some of it is outdated due to the ever moving field of drug addiction.

This slim volume should be read by College members if for no other reason than to realize how the Medical Recording Foundation at Kitts Croft (John and Valerie Graves) has the demonstration and reference material to teach this subject. Full marks to them.

The tenor of these collected papers is certainly of interest yet more careful editing might have avoided the considerable overlap and repetition. The chapter "ABC" by Dr Elizabeth Tylden is a worthwhile collection of terminology and slang as used by the drug addict and as such makes this little volume worthwhile for all those who are only occasionally exposed to this variation of human behaviour. One might have more fully extended this ABC with the language of the alcoholic patient. It is fascinating to read that the old "stairhead gas" has been turned into a respectable "Corporation Cocktail", surely an indicator of our advancing middle-class behaviour. That "Blue's" are aspirin dipped in blue ink has been long suspected, and we wonder how soon "Purple's" will appear as aspirins soaked in potass permang. The knavish inventiveness of the human is prodigious.

It is a pity that one contributor feels that much blame must rest with those of the older generation who refuse to accept the anodyne selected by the young. In the wild cups of our student days we threw ourselves into the "blind" without giving the older generation a thought, except perhaps to wonder how much extra money we might extract from them to pay for it all.

Tempera o mores.

A provocative number of pages.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Practical hints for housemen. D. S. HOPTON, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.S. and I. J. T. DAVIES, M.B., M.R.C.P. Cardiff. Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books) Limited. 1970. Pp. 245. Price £2.00.