

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.