

this occasion concern six areas of disease: The cardiovascular system, genetics in medicine, disorders of the nervous system, stress in society, haematology and renal disease.

In the session on genetics, The Lumleian Lecture given by Dr J. A. Fraser Roberts took for its title 'Genetics in Medicine', and Professor C. A. Clarke gave a clear and fascinating paper on 'Prevention of Rh Immunization'. Dr J. H. Edwards, professor of human genetics at the Birmingham Maternity Hospital, served notice to us all of a wide field in which our patients will shortly look to their general practitioners for wise and informed guidance on matters of vital importance in their personal genetic problems. Professor Edwards spoke on 'Foetal Diagnosis in Genetic Disease', and although certain of the diseases he mentions are rare, the whole field of these linkage studies offers a great challenge to those whose chosen life gives them the privilege of living among and knowing the families who will with increasing frequency be having these problems clarified by experts.

In the grave final decisions raised by the prenatal diagnosis of serious inherited disease it is unthinkable that the family doctor should not be fully informed upon the issues and the responsibilities involved in matters that may deny life to an affected foetus, after diagnosis at a very early stage of pregnancy. This paper alone will make many wish to read and own this inexpensive book which is full of new knowledge and much wisdom.

The anticipation of hereditary disorders by identification of traits and structures, often trivial in themselves yet genetically associated or gene-linked to grave heritable illnesses, will increasingly attract those in practice who realize the opportunities of observation and record, over many years and several generations, sufferers who attend our crowded clinics. Here will lie the sure foundations of much future research in general practice.

Another session in which general-practitioner consultation is important was dealt with under the chairmanship of Sir Denis Hill, 'Stress in Society'. Here was discussed in excellent papers the reaction of the individual to stress, serving to underline the importance of the patient's reactions to the pressures of modern society as well as to the processes of disease. Problems of the hidden aspects of an all too common problem were well set out by Professor H. J. Walton in a paper 'Alcoholism in Britain'.

Dr H. Matthews gave a lecture on 'Self Poisoning', and reproduces in his figure I, (page 183) the quite vertical graph line showing the vast increase in admissions of poisoned patients to the

Edinburgh Royal Infirmary during the years 1928 to 1970, a reflection of a great failure of our ability to help many of our troubled and insecure patients in our imperfect yet ever advancing search for human happiness.

There is very much more within these closely packed pages that the reader must find for himself. The book cannot be too highly recommended to all who have the responsibility of carrying advanced medical knowledge into the practical daily round of general practice.

**Music and the physically handicapped.** Report of the Joint Study Conference. April 1970. Disabled Living Foundation: London. Pp. 3+64. Price 50p.

This is the report of a study conference held at the Goldsmiths' Hall, London, 6 April 1970 and sponsored jointly by the Disabled Living Foundation (which has taken over the work of the Disabled Living Activities Group of the Central Council for the Disabled) and the National Council of Social Service.

The enjoyment of music—and, still more, the making of music as part of a team—can play important rôles in keeping the physically handicapped, including the senior citizen, as an integral part of the community. The activities of local authorities in trying to foster the cultural interests of their handicapped citizens vary—for example of the 149 local education authorities in England, 29 have no music adviser; in Scotland the corresponding figure is seven out of thirty six.

How to enable the handicapped to take part in cultural pursuits—and *take part* are the key words here, mere onlooking or listening is not enough—is no easy problem, for example the provision of suitable transport from home to cultural centre or again, access to the concert hall by the occupant of the wheel-chair are but two of many such problems. But the adage attributed (rightly or wrongly) to Lord Montgomery of Alamein is applicable here—"The difficult we do at once, the impossible takes a little longer".

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

**People and cancer and the problem and relevance in cancer research.** Two meetings. Edited by Dr GRAHAM BENNETTE. London. The British Cancer Council. Pp. 5 + 112.

**Biochemical values in clinical medicine.** Fourth Edition. ROBERT DUNCAN EASTHAM, B.A., M.D., F.R.C.Path., D.C.P. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1971. Pp. 1+191. Price £1.00.