

A CEREBRAL PALSIED CHILD

Dear Ann. By Rev. S. P. Freeland, Pp. 107. R1.25. Johannesburg: Central News Agency. 1962.

The publication of *Dear Ann* is an event of great importance in the history of the cerebral palsy movement in South Africa. This is the first book devoted entirely to the story of a cerebral palsied child in this country and is a worthy companion to books written by the parents of cerebral palsied children in other countries. What is most important is the authority with which Mr. Freeland writes. As chairman of the Cerebral Palsy Division of the National Council for the Care of Cripples in South Africa, he knows better than anyone else what is being done for the cerebral palsied here in South Africa. He is a tower of strength to our local movement.

Dear Ann is a simple story told in simple language. It is the story of an adopted child who was found to be suffering from a severe degree of spasticity early on in life. In addition to her spasticity Ann has perceptual difficulties. Her brain is unable to visualize objects in their correct perspective. This book describes the experiences of Ann's parents and their emotional reactions when they first began to 'feel' that there was something wrong with their child. How can one adequately put into words one's feelings when perched on the brink of despair? How can one explain those doubts and hesitations which assail one in the early days before any definite medical diagnosis is made. Mr. Freeland has with great delicacy portrayed the sensations that he and his wife experienced. Not every medical practitioner is able to feel with his patients, but one who can is in a position to assist them with a communion of spirit that does not require language.

I think that the Freelands were fortunate with their doctors. Ann's disability was diagnosed when she was 12 months old—exceptionally early; for a decade ago diagnosis was usually made years after parents complained of the child's abnormal development.

Throughout the world there are common factors in the history of cerebral palsy. The same tale is told: the early fears of the parents, the doubts, the diagnosis, the frequent consultations, the lack of facilities for treatment, and the eventual establishment of some sort of facilities by the parents of children such as Ann.

Her parents began life in South Africa as missionaries in Zululand. Their love and need for children was satisfied through adopting John and Ann. John was a normal child. Ann had the misfortune to be born a spastic, with all four limbs affected. Her misfortune, however, resulted in numerous other children with similar disabilities being assisted in their education and treatment, for the Freelands devoted their whole energy to the promotion of facilities for the cerebral palsied.

In short chapters he has told the story of Ann, and the development of the cerebral palsy movement in South Africa. The book gives a good insight into the role of the parents of a cerebral palsied child. Ann was indeed fortunate to have such wonderful parents. With intelligence well above the average, with determination and courage of a high order, with the faith of their religious beliefs, the Freelands provided an

environment giving Ann the maximum potential for success. They sought the best medical help, both in South Africa and abroad. They sent her to the best available schools, both in Johannesburg and Pretoria. They cooperated to the maximum with therapists and teachers. They used their own ingenuity and that of their friends in making equipment for the child. For example, a friend constructed a tricycle with a special seat and with special gears, so that when Ann pedalled backwards the tricycle went forwards. This was a good exercise for Ann's legs. In spite of all this Ann has great handicaps. It is still not known whether she will be able to walk, although since the publication of the book she has undergone surgical treatment. Her education is still a great problem. There has been no breakthrough in the techniques of teaching brain-injured children with perceptual difficulties. The Freelands have a long way to go before Ann is adequately rehabilitated, but they are on the right road.

This book should be widely read. Its message is important to the public, who need to be kept informed of the facilities for cerebral palsied children in South Africa. The medical and auxiliary medical professions are given an insight into the emotional reactions of parents of these children. Teachers, in their noble and difficult task of imparting knowledge, will realize the great need for research in this particular field. Parents will see that, by helping other handicapped children, they help their own.*

B.E.

* The whole of the royalties from the sale of this book will be donated to the Community Settlement for the Cerebral Palsied, which the National Council for the Care of Cripples in South Africa has decided to establish.

ACQUIRED LESIONS OF THE OESOPHAGUS

Acquired Surgical Lesions of the Esophagus. By C. F. Storey, M.D. Pp. xxii + 365. Illustrated. \$19.00. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1962.

This readable monograph fully covers all the acquired surgical lesions of the oesophagus. The aetiology, symptoms, investigative findings and surgical treatment of common and uncommon pathological conditions are described, and a perspective review of current surgical concepts is given. Dr. Clifford Storey, responsible for all chapters except one, writes with personal experience and conviction and does not believe that 'it is reasonable to await routinely the development of complications before treating a hiatus hernia surgically; neither, that bougienage is the treatment of choice for virtually all stenotic lesions of the oesophagus, or, that transoesophageal ligation of otherwise uncontrollable bleeding varices is a more conservative approach than an emergency portacaval shunt'. The encouraging trend in this book, including the *quality* as well as the length of survival of patients with oesophageal disease, should be of particular interest to physicians.

Co-authors devoted a short chapter to carcinoma and other malignant lesions that may involve the oesophagus.

As several books on the oesophagus have been published recently, it is a disappointment to find that the literature of the last two and a half years is not referred to.

The book is well illustrated and well produced. It should be a valuable addition to the bookshelf of everyone interested in, and dealing with, oesophageal disease.

G.S.M.B.