which is well printed and easily read in an afternoon, is described as a manual—and could well serve as a light comment on some trends in medical literature nowadays.

The author, like all workers in such a field, has his special interests, and these persuade him to give a relatively extensive consideration to certain methods of treatment (which are admittedly successful only in the hands of the much experienced) and yet to give insufficient information for the tyro to undertake the techniques. Nevertheless, the general approach is stimulating and interesting—and is redolent of clinical practice, whence, once, the best medical literature sprang.

JONATHAN GOULD.


A symposium on the Etiology of Chronic Alcoholism, edited by Dr. Oscar Diethelm, who also planned and directed the research programme, of which this book is the first-fruits, after some six years of labour by a large team representing several disciplines, approaches the problem from various aspects. These include clinical psychiatric descriptive studies, genetic studies including a comparison between American and Swiss patients; a social anthropological study of a quasi-segregated Chinese community in New York, in which alcoholism was not a significant problem, and a chapter on the biochemical characteristics of the blood of the alcoholic—giving perhaps new significance, in due course, to the phrase “the hair of the dog . . . ”.

The whole, is introduced by a chapter by Dr. Diethelm, in which he explains the premises of the work, defines his terms—particularly “chronic alcoholic” and “excessive drinker”—which definitions are employed in each succeeding chapter, being re-stated by the contributor.

Dr. Diethelm draws the broad picture of the work, indicating that there were aspects, such as the Rorschach studies, which could not be prepared in time for publication, but which he draws on, to the reader’s interest, as in commenting that only four of the patients studied (76 current, and 85 case histories) corresponded to Rorschach’s original description. The comparison between Rorschach results and biochemical investigation, however, each carried on independently of the clinical psychiatric study and of each other, gives positive agreement in a surprisingly high proportion of instances, where emotions of anxiety or resentment were concerned (90 per cent.). If Dr. Diethelm has a special interest in any aspect of his symposium, it would seem to be in connection with the work, reported by M. Freile Fleetwood, in the chapter on Biochemical Experimental Investigations of Emotions and Chronic Alcoholism, in which there is adduced evidence in support of the claim that there are to be found distinct chemical substances in the blood, in association with, and quantitatively varying with the intensity of, the moods of anxiety, tension and resentment.

These substances are (nor-) adrenaline-like, acetyl-choline-like, and another, dubbed “resentment-substance” which has an acetyl-choline-like effect on certain animal tissue preparations only after these have been submitted to the action of hyoscyamus with consequent destruction of acetyl-choline effect. (An acetyl-choline like compound is considered the tension substance.) The material offered in support of this thesis, is immense, and perhaps not readily assimilable to the clinician, who might well feel that, at times, generalizations are made from single instances, and that the whole thesis of “resentment-substance”, to which alcohol is deemed a specific biochemical and psychic antidote, is founded upon the responses of nine out of ten alcoholic patients, to whom whisky (six ounces) was given, four hours after breakfast. Another alcoholic patient became more resentful and suspicious, as was understandable in view of her history, and the concentration of “resentment-substance” rose. In two other alcoholics, who were atypical, in that they were not resentful, but anxious people, the concentration of anxiety-substance, not “resentment-substance”, was mainly affected. The general flavour of this chapter is that the biochemistry accounts for the psychic state, and that the alcoholic is distinctive in that he generates
"resentment-substance"—to which alcohol is a specific antidote. Several cases which would suggest the opposite, that the resentment-substance found by Fleetwood was produced as a somatic response to the psychic state, are mentioned, and then disregarded. The correlation between biochemical findings and psychiatric findings appears to be 100 per cent. with regard to all three substances, and this elicits no comment from the author, and although he notes that some people are unaware of their emotions, he seems to overlook both repression and disassociation as sources of biochemico-psychic discrepancy. Neither does he draw any inference from the discrepancy noted in a technician, who, having been found to have "resentment-substance" in her blood when apparently urbane, admitted to covert resentment regarding the promotion of her colleague. Finally, the effect of six ounces of whisky was to banish "resentment-substance" and resentment, for more than 24 hours, except in two cases, where up to ten ounces proved necessary. This observation serves to throw enough light on the natural history of chronic alcoholism, to show how far from understanding are we—in a biochemical sense—the drinking bout which goes on for days and involves more than ten ounces of spirit! Clearly, more problems are raised than solved by Dr. Fleetwood, but this is research, and it is to be hoped that in the further edition of this book, to which one would look forward in due course, the few blemishes in the format of this chapter (such as the presence both of a diagram and a photograph of the experimental apparatus employed, to neither of which is there appended a description of the components, the function of some of which are not at once clear to the Clinician; and the omission of the designation of Figure 2) may be removed from an otherwise stimulating contribution.

The clinical psychiatric studies of 161 cases (76 current and 85 derived from over 400 records), presented by Dr. Sherfey, have been based on material investigated with particular assiduity. The criteria of acceptability of the case histories of past patients were stringent, as is indicated by the acceptance of less than 1 in 5 case records of alcoholics as adequate in detail and extent. On the basis of this material, Dr. Sherfey divides the psychiatric hinterland of alcoholism into eleven syndromes, five of which are orthodox psychiatric diagnoses, which, however, account for rather less than half the number of patients. The larger half is divided into syndromes, most of which are sex-linked, and are combinations of terms indicative of emotional maladjustment.

Dr. Sherfey’s conclusion is that alcoholism is a symptom or mode of reaction to stress with no characteristic or specific psychiatric prerequisites, although an adequate recognition of the psychiatric concomitants is essential in the evaluation of the given case. She also makes a point, which is, perhaps, not given adequate prominence (although it fits in very well with the implications and conclusions of the anthropological survey), that alcoholism in women increases with social acceptance of woman’s consumption of alcohol in public.

The force of the social sanction with regard to alcohol, its use, in varying degree and circumstance, and, finally, the power of the social sanction to prevent, almost completely, the abuse of alcohol in the form of chronic alcoholism, is drawn, in interesting fashion, by Dr. Barnett, in a social anthropological study of the 5,000 or more Chinese who form a quasi-segregated community in New York. These people have retained through two generations, so far, almost intact, their original valuesystems, which prescribe, clearly and benevolently, those occasions when alcohol may be consumed, and, at times, very liberally. The social recoil, or even revulsion, from one who fails to recognize his limits, and who cannot, therefore, desist while still in control, may take many forms. Women are not permitted as much access to alcohol, as are men, and a woman the worse for drink is the greater disgrace to herself, her family, her sex and her community. Interest in consumption of opium and the like was scrupulously avoided.

This is a very ably executed piece of observation and reporting, which is, admittedly, only an account of the first-hand impressions formed by the author during six months of field-work among the people of New York’s Chinatown. The psychiatrist
cannot but be interested in a report such as this, and would greet further instalments with pleasure.

The clinical psychiatric pièces de résistance in this volume, are the contributions by M. Bleuler, who spent a year with the workers at the Payne-Whitney Clinic, where Dr. Diethelm is Director. Here, Dr. Bleuler made his own further examination of 50 American Alcoholics undergoing treatment. By virtue of the criteria for admission to this Clinic and its associated beds, the patients were of the upper intellectual and occupational strata. Some of Dr. Bleuler's conclusions must be quoted:

Schizophrenia, manic-depression, epilepsy and oligophrenia, are no more common among the siblings and antecedents of alcoholics than among the average population of the same social and economic class. But alcoholism is much more common among siblings, antecedents and spouses, and so are morbid personalities, than in the average population of the same social and economic class. Most of these findings may be generalized, in view of his own further work in Switzerland (of which he contributes a preliminary discussion in a further chapter), and, also, the work of others which he quotes to effect. He uses his studies on alcoholism to refute the postulate that homosexuality is a necessary precondition, and to make cogent argument concerning those psychodynamic theories of schizophrenia, which causally relate this condition to stress in the mother relationship. Endocrinopathy may, in the given case, be a relevant factor in alcoholism, either as a causative metabolic lesion, or as a focus of emotional disturbance. Finally, the genetics of alcoholism are the genetics of abnormal personality development, of which alcoholism is mainly to be considered a symptom. But only an indication can be given here of the clinical satisfaction to be found in reading these lucid chapters, despite their far from infrequent impressive tables of figures, which the text brings alive.

Thus, the picture emanating from these pages is the alcoholic as a person, still more commonly male, who, the carrier of emotional maladjustment, of more or less formal and overt sort, responds to the stress of living, created by his environment and his reaction to it, by a self-damaging form of behaviour familiar to him in his near-ones in his formative years, and permitted by the society in which he finds himself. "Drowning one's sorrows in drink" has become transformed into "resolving resentment in rye", and all the usual and familiar adjuvants of the anamnesis of maladjusted ones are present, in profusion, in the pasts of these. To boot, there may be somatic strains—perhaps endocrine and perhaps metabolic—but the main impression of the volume is that the aetiology is to be found in social, cultural, familial domestic and psychogenic spheres, if in the latter it be permitted to include those psychic phenomena which are temperamentally determined, and all pivoting upon the generation of resentment, and "resentment-substance" to which alcohol is the antidote.

Dr. Diethelm deserves full admiration for his inspiration and leadership of this team of workers, far greater in number and diversity of discipline than the list of official contributors. He has been midwife to a volume which will interest every clinical psychiatrist, whether he have a special interest in alcoholism or not—and a volume which has sections to give much food for thought to all who are interested in the misuses of one of the greater gifts to man.

Dr. Diethelm mentions, in his opening chapter, that the work so far done has provided clues for more investigation, and Dr. M. Bleuler records the wider project on which he is now engaged at the Burgholzli. Their further reports are matters for anticipation.

Jonathan Gould.


These two volumes, to be followed by three more, set the stage for the test study—an exegesis of the day-to-day notes of a case treated for two years psychoanalytically—by considering basic postulates and the function, discerned in dreams, of the process of integration. This is an innovation in psycho-analytical thought, briefly summarized in Volume I. "First, the motivating pressure of a need seeks