

catheters may be thought heroic, but a critical study of his many recommendations will stir some clinicians from too conservative an approach to a dangerous illness. Dr. McNichol includes a brisk review of recent work on the aetiology of delirium tremens, and on less well known physical complications of alcoholism such as Zieve's syndrome and the reversible muscular syndrome. He also discusses the treatment and rehabilitation of chronic alcoholics without physical complications. This part of the text contains little that is new, but the author's enthusiasm for, and (in 4,000 cases) remarkable success with, disulfiram are unfashionable enough to be noteworthy.

DENIS PARR.

The Epidemiology of Opiate Addiction in the United States. Compiled and edited by JOHN C. BALL and CARL D. CHAMBERS. Springfield, Illinois. Charles C. Thomas. 1970. Pp. 337. Price \$15.50.

Descriptions of the problems of narcotic addiction in the United States, in the medical Press and elsewhere, may have aroused in some readers an oversimplified and generalized impression of an 'addicted' American society. The inaccuracy of such a view is at once revealed by this book which is in effect a handbook giving comprehensive details of the patterns of opiate addiction within the United States. An excellent and detailed study, it provides information on the history and patterns of drug use and abuse, and analyses the distribution of narcotic addiction among the different races and subcultures of the American population. Association of opiates with other drug addictions is also discussed, as well as the medical problems of addiction.

Fortunately opiate addiction in Great Britain is far less serious than in America, but it is quite possible that with the increasing mobility of travellers between the two countries, we may see a similar, but hopefully far less extensive, pattern developing here. We may even now be in the preliminary stages with hashish and the hallucinogens. This book may be read as an interesting survey of the American narcotics problem. However, those concerned with narcotic addiction in Britain would be well advised to read it, since knowledge of the American problem could prevent a similar one developing here. Forewarned could prove to be forearmed.

T. R. WILSON.

The Alcoholic—and the Help he Needs. By MAX GLATT. Prior Press. Royston, Herts. 1970. Parts 1 (General) and 2 (Treatment) each 50p. Within very little space, and despite the handicap

of dull typography, Dr. Max Glatt has to excellent effect marshalled extensive data in these two small paperback volumes. The books are directed to both medical and non-medical students of alcoholism. Dr. Glatt succeeds both in providing a masterly review which emphasizes social aspects and also in avoiding excessive simplification. He firmly discredits the facile and popular notions that only 'gamma' alcoholics of good previous personality are amenable to treatment, and that permanent abstinence is the sole criterion of therapeutic success. The author's experience, scholarship, and compassionate insight give these inexpensive volumes breadth, weight, and value that it would be hard to match.

DENIS PARR.

PHARMACOLOGY

The Present State of Psychotropic Drugs. (Proceedings of the VIth International Congress of the Collegium Internationale Neuro-Psychopharmacologicum.) Edited by A. CERLETTI and F. J. BOVÉ. 1969. Excerpta Medica Foundation. Pp. 572. Price £15.05.

Owing to an error I am afraid this review is very late. However, this delay offered an unusual opportunity of reassessing the value of a book of this type two years after publication. The book is in fact the proceedings of the VIth International Congress of the Collegium Internationale Neuro-Psychopharmacologicum held in Tarragona, Spain 24–27 April, 1968. As is usual in these publications, the mass of the book is devoted to short communications, which were often shortened versions of previously published papers, and almost invariably too short to allow full evaluation. This allows readers to get an overview of current work, enabling them to go on to more detailed publications if interested. Re-reading the book now, most of these short communications are dated and only worthwhile as of historical interest. Good examples are the papers by Price Evans, Hollister, Sjoquist and Levine all pointing to the importance of the way in which patients metabolize psychotropic drugs in relation to clinical effects, a concept which is now firmly established and a subject of immense activity. This confirms this reviewer's previously published opinion on expensive publications of this type, that they are worth borrowing from a library, but not buying as they so soon lose their value.

C. M. B. PARE.

Clinical Handbook of Psychopharmacology. Edited by ALBERTO DI MASCIO and RICHARD I. SHADER. Science House, New York. Pp. 395. No price stated.

This book is a collection of lectures on various