there is still a long way to go before Anthony Clare's request can be met.

Amongst the many biochemical theories discussed in connection with alcohol dependence is a contribution by Madden in chapter 13. He notes that GABA inhibition may be interfered with and thus tolerance promoted. He suggests that "a long-term reversal of the neuroadaptive alteration by means of drug therapy would strike at the heart of one of the most central aspects of dependence", and echoes Clare's thoughts—"It would be even more desirable to prevent the neuroadaptive stages in the first place". Madden also discusses the role of the limbic system in dependence. He points out that drugs which counteract anxiety in humans—including alcohol, barbiturates and benzodiazepines—all reduce activity of the septohippocampal area and opines that chemical modification of its activity by more suitable drugs may become practical. He discusses several substances, such as clonidine, which ameliorate abstinence syndromes and yet carry no dependence liability—surely the basis for a useful potential clinical advance now that benzodiazepine dependence is recognised to be so prevalent.

In chapter 16 drug-alcohol interactions are exhaustively discussed by Saunders and Williams. Their therapeutic guidelines at the end of the chapter will be of considerable interest and value to the clinician. Another chapter which will interest the clinician is chapter 25 by Jaffe entitled 'Alcoholism and Affective Disturbances: Current Drugs and Current Shortcomings'. This chapter contains an up-to-date summary of the effectiveness of lithium in the treatment of alcoholism and depressive symptoms.

It is quite impossible to give a comprehensive resumé of this densely written and erudite volume in a short review article. However, I hope that I have done a little to encourage both clinicians and scientific research workers who are concerned with the problems of alcoholism to read this book. Their patience will be amply rewarded.

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A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

"The subject of a more complete training for asylum attendants has for some time been in various ways under the consideration of the Medico-Psychological Association, and it was fully discussed by Dr Campbell Clark in a paper read before the quarterly meeting recently held in Edinburgh. He had given two courses of lectures, followed by examinations, to his staff, and had obtained such decided advantages that he strongly urged his fellow-members to take similar action. He suggested also that a scheme might be adopted whereby the grading of attendants could be affected, and believed that certificates of proficiency, given in some way under the auspices of the Association, would be striven for by their best men, and accepted by superintendents as of high value. It having appeared that Dr W. A. F. Browne, late of Dumfries Asylum, and now Commissioner in Lunacy for Scotland, had many years ago delivered a similar course of lectures, and that a paper of like import to Dr Clark's had been read by Dr Clouston, the meeting determined upon taking some action in the matter, and appointed a committee, which met a few days ago in Glasgow. It is likely that the scheme for providing certificated attendants will remain in abeyance; that individual superintendents will be left to supply instruction in the way they think best; but that an authoritative *Manual of Instruction of Attendants on the Insane* should be issued as a general basis for work. This handbook will contain such simple physiology as bears on the treatment of mental disease, will indicate the commoner symptoms of asylum diseases, and treat generally of the nursing, management and care of the insane. The committee, which consists of Drs Campbell Clark, Urquhart, Turnbull, and Campbell, have begun their work, and invite reports as to the results of such instruction to attendants as asylum physicians may have given".

Tall oaks from little acorns grow.

Researched by Henry R. Rollin, Honorary Librarian, Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Reference

The Lancet, (March 22, 1884) Training of asylum attendants, pp. 539.

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