scant mention because it was not generally available in the USA at the time of the workshop. As two-thirds of the book are set aside for discussion of analytical methods, it will be of limited interest to any but those actively engaged in laboratory work, but for the latter there is much information of a nature not easy to find elsewhere. Particularly important is the message of quality control, without which the reliability of laboratory results can be very poor. The analyst will obtain useful guidance from this book on the clinical application of drug levels, but in my view the contributors swing too far in their enthusiasm for measuring drugs. For instance, although it is admitted that "controversy still continues as to whether or not primidone itself has any anticonvulsant activity apart from derived phenobarbitone," the belief is nevertheless expressed that "determination of serum levels of primidone . . . is a clinically useful procedure." Why? Until we know that it is active in man, and we have worked out the degree of activity relative to derived phenobarbitone, why waste the laboratory's time (and money)? But perhaps views on the relative value and cost of tests are different under the American health care system than here.

ALAN RICHENS

Clinics in Endocrinology and Metabolism Metabolic Effects of Alcohol Volume 7, Number 2 Edited by V. Marks and J. Wright. (Pp. 466; illustrated; £8.25.) W. B. Saunders: London, Philadelphia, Toronto. 1978.

In many publications on alcohol and alcoholism it is easy to sink in a morass of conflicting views on both metabolism and treatment.

This book gives a good presentation of the effects of ethanol on metabolism by considering first its general influence, and then its effect on specialised aspects of metabolism. The general aspects are covered competently by Badawy, followed by a useful chapter on the influence of ethanol metabolism on the metabolism of other drugs by Chakraborty. Fink and Rosalki discuss the clinical biochemistry of alcoholism. The book then turns to the influence of ethanol on specific metabolic systems—Janus and Lewis on lipid metabolism, one of the editors, Dr Marks, on carbohydrate metabolism, and the other editor, Dr Wright, on the endocrine effects of ethanol. Two linked chapters follow, one on the effects of ethanol upon neurotransmitters by Littleton, and the other on the nervous system by Shaw. Nutrition is discussed by Thomson, and Gazzard and Clark cover the alimentary system. The book ends with a comprehensive presentation of alterations to the haemopoietic system by Cumming and Goldberg.

In general, each of the chapters covers its topic adequately. There is, however, some regrettable overlap between the effects of alcohol on the nervous system and on nutrition that could have been avoided by more judicious editing. It is also surprising that in the chapter on alcohol and nutrition nothing is said about anaemia in alcoholism, although this is fortunately covered in the chapter on alcohol and the haemopoietic system. More seriously, the chapter on nutrition which considers the influence on the B vitamins in some depth, says little or nothing about the other vitamins, and specifically nothing is said about vitamin C deficiency which is commonly found in alcoholism. Despite these few failings, this is a useful book for anyone requiring a body of basic information on the metabolism of ethanol.

MICHAEL R. MOORE

Neurochemical and Immunologic Components in Schizophrenia Edited by Daniel Bergsma and Allan L. Goldstein. (Pp. 431; illustrated; $46.) Alan R. Liss: New York. 1978.

Schizophrenia is a disease of unknown aetiology. This book is the result of a symposium at which certain aspects of the genetics, virology, and immunology of the nervous system were discussed in the hope that direction might be given to future research in schizophrenia. Having read this book, I came to the conclusion that it does itself have a distinct schizoid flavour. While many of the contributors are internationally renowned in their fields and their discussions are of merit in their own right, these seem to have little or no relation to the problem of schizophrenia. The first section is devoted to what constitutes schizophrenia and we are told in summary that "schizophrenia, which may be only a symptom complex common to several types of disorders, is distinguishable from other causes of some of the symptoms!"

The second section is on virology, and we have heard it many times before. Chapters include a brief discussion on the role of slow viruses by Gajdusek, a review of the evidence for infection in multiple sclerosis by Carp, with a claim for the recognition of a replicating agent in the disease which has since been disproved, and a detailed review of the HLA system in multiple sclerosis by Jersild. A short chapter on HLA antigens in schizophrenia is presented but we are told that because of the small patient sample, definite conclusions cannot be drawn.

The third section is a mixture of papers on general immunology, autoimmunity, systemic lupus erythematosus, immune complex deposits in the choroid plexus, experimental allergic encephalomyelitis and neuritis, and a truly provocative chapter on "possible utilisation of extracorporeal immunoabsorption and other immunologic methods in the treatment of schizophrenia."

The fourth section deals with studies of the CSF in the disease and studies of sera from schizophrenic patients: there was a significant increase of passive haemagglutination of coated erythrocytes found in schizophrenia, with a significant decrease in the level of nerve growth factor and antigen demonstrated in the sera of schizophrenics. This section ends with a novel chapter on the use of phenylalanine ammonia-lyase and its use in the selective manipulation of the levels of certain aromatic amino-acids in the serum.

The final section covers aspects of humoral and cellular immunity, and I must admit to several surprises. The first and second papers to me were indecipherable, but there seemed to be a claim that the serum and lymphocytes of schizophrenics are abnormal. A final paper contains a summary of the data on the inhibitory effect of chlorpromazine on lymphocyte activation.

In summarising the conference the chairman stated that it had been an eye-opener for him: I can only concur. The study of schizophrenia is such a controversial field that I do not think this muddled compilation will assist students, research workers, or clinicians.

P. O. BEHAN