

Part II.—Reviews.

Civilization and its Discontents. By SIGMUND FREUD. Authorized translation by JOAN RIVIERE. The International Psycho-Analytical Library, No. 17. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1930. Medium 8vo. Pp. 144. Price 8s. 6d. net.

Psychology, mainly in its psycho-analytic aspects, has increasingly attempted to shed light on problems which not long ago would have been considered quite beyond its domain. We have here such a delightful exposition of the Freudian standpoint on the subject under review, that no matter how much a reader may find it difficult or impossible to accept the author's views, he will inevitably be attracted and stimulated by the lucid charm of their presentation within these pages.

The ultimate source of religious sentiment in mankind, the sensation of "eternity," the feeling of something limitless, something "oceanic" is dissected. Genetically the relation of the ego to the external world is reviewed, and though it is acknowledged that the "oceanic" feeling exists in many people, its origin is seen really to be due to the childish feeling of helplessness and need of a father's protection. The dangers of the external world activate these feelings, which take the shape of religious consolations. "The ordinary man cannot imagine this Providence in any other form but that of an exalted father, for only such a one could understand the needs of the sons of men, or be softened by their prayers and placated by the signs of their remorse." This infantile attitude, so incongruous with reality, persists in adult life largely because of the inevitable pain and disappointment of the outer world. In many ways man endeavours to obtain some happiness, or at any rate escape unhappiness. Such paths may lie in the powerful diversion of interest in work, intoxicating substances, the sublimation of art, phantasy life, the annihilation of the instincts as practised by the Yogi or the hermit, or in the substitutive gratifications of neurotic illness. Where the efforts to obtain happiness come to naught, psychosis may result as a despairing attempt at revolt. By decrying the value of life, and by distorting the real world as in delusion, religion imposes a state of mental infantilism, and thus succeeds in saving many from neurosis.

Human suffering is derived from the superior force of Nature and the disposition of our bodies to decay. These are inevitable. The inadequacy of our methods of regulating human relations in the

family, the community and the state is a source of unhappiness, and this leads Freud to examine the problem whether and how civilization and culture are to blame for a great part of our misery.

The chapters on the origin and evolution of culture contain highly interesting psycho-analytical view-points. Primitive love and the family are discussed. It is seen that as development proceeds, love opposes the interests of culture, and culture menaces love with grievous restrictions; this is expressed in a conflict between the family and the larger community to which the individual belongs. Discord, too, is caused by woman, who represents the interests of the family and sexual life. "Since man has not an unlimited amount of mental energy at his disposal, he must accomplish his tasks by distributing his libido to the best advantage. What he employs for cultural purposes he withdraws to a great extent from woman and his sexual life; his constant association with men, and his dependence on his relations with them, ever estrange him from his duties as husband and father. Woman thus finds herself forced into the background by the claims of culture, and she adopts an inimical attitude towards it." Freud thinks, too, that as a result of the oppression of culture, the importance of sexuality as a source of pleasurable sensations, *i.e.*, as a means of fulfilling the purpose of life, has perceptibly decreased.

There must be disturbing influences in culture which give rise to its antagonism to sexuality. Clues are found in the so-called ethical standards of civilized society, such as "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" and "Love thine enemies." The powerful measure of desire for aggression in mankind, as part of their instinctual endowment, has to be reckoned with, and civilized society is perpetually menaced with disintegration through this primary hostility. Thus the evolution of culture comes finally to mean the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instincts of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species. "And it is this battle of the Titans that our nurses and governesses try to compose with their lullaby-song of Heaven!" It is asked what means civilization uses to hold in check the aggressiveness that opposes it. Freud states it is through the introjection of the aggressive tendencies which are taken over by the super-ego or conscience; the resulting sense of guilt manifests itself as the need for punishment. "Civilization, therefore, obtains the mastery over the dangerous love of aggression in individuals by enfeebling and disarming it, and setting up an institution within their minds to keep watch over it." The sense of guilt is regarded as the most important problem in the evolution of culture, and the price of progress in civilization is paid in forfeiting happiness through the heightening of this sense.

The task of culture is that of uniting human beings into a larger unity with libidinal attachments to each other. Individual development is a product of the interplay of egoistic and altruistic trends, and it would seem as if humanity could be most successfully united into one great whole if there were no need to trouble about individual happiness. The struggle between individual and society is not derived from the antagonism of the primal instincts, Eros and

Death, which are probably irreconcilable; it is a dissension in the camp of the libido itself, and it does eventually admit of a solution in the individual, as, it is hoped, it will do also in the future of civilization. The ethical standards of the cultural ego do not trouble enough about the mental constitution of human beings. It is presumed that a man's ego is psychologically capable of anything that is required of it. "What an overwhelming obstacle to civilization aggression must be if the defence against it can cause as much misery as aggression itself!" The fateful question to Freud is "whether and to what extent the cultural process will succeed in mastering the derangements of communal life caused by the human instincts of aggression and self-destruction."

Altogether this is a monograph which should be read and studied by all.

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Recent Advances in the Study of the Psychoneuroses. By MILLAIS CULPIN, M.D., F.R.C.S. London: J. & A. Churchill. Pp. viii + 348. Demy 8vo. Price 12s. 6d.

The book opens with a historical introduction, and then proceeds to psychopathology *via* the psychoneuroses of war. Subsequent chapters deal with the Present Position of Psycho-analysis, the Relation of Physiological and Psychological Processes, Nomenclature and Diagnosis, Occupational Neuroses, and Psychoneuroses in Industry. Four chapters are written by independent authors, and deal respectively with Individual Psychology (Dr. A. R. Redfern), Analytical Psychology (Dr. James Young), the Psychopathology of Childhood (Dr. E. Miller), and Psychotherapeutic Clinics (Dr. J. R. Rees).

The book is well written, interesting and pleasantly presented. Especially good are the chapters on war neuroses and industrial psychology—two aspects of the subject in which the author's extensive experience stands him in good stead. Well chosen clinical material, succinctly described and profusely scattered throughout the book, gives vividness to what might otherwise have proved a mere collection of dull theories. We are glad to see emphasis laid on the relations between mental and bodily processes, though it seems a pity that the constitutional method of approach (as exemplified, say, by Kretschmer) was not accorded definite recognition. The chapter on Adler is clear and adequate, as is that on child psychology. The inclusion of the chapter on Psychotherapeutic Clinics is of special significance and usefulness, now that the systematic treatment of the milder forms of mental disorder is likely to receive a new impetus as a result of the recent Mental Treatment Act.

The merits of the book are many. There are, however, one or two defects worth mentioning. The main one is in connection with the theoretical background, which is described in a manner that is not only eclectic, but indefinite. The most important chapter in this