

Part II.—Reviews.

Active Psychotherapy. By ALEXANDER HERZBERG, M.D., Ph.D. London: Research Books, Ltd., 1945. Pp. 152. Price 12s. 6d.

This psychotherapist is a eclectic and, though his sheet-anchor is psycho-analysis, other methods borrowed from various sources are incorporated into his therapeutic system. His main disagreement with the Freudians is that he does not admit the universal importance of repression in the aetiology of the neuroses. His psychology and psychopathology is practically identical with that of McDougall, the mind being conceived as a hierarchy, which is, or should be, dominated by the sentiment of self-regard. Other methods employed in active psychotherapy are persuasion, the exertion of direct influence on the patient's environment and the use of tasks which the patient has to carry out. In the case of the last two, at a mental hospital, such work is carried out by the social worker and the occupational therapist under the psychiatrist's direction. Here Dr. Herzberg has a valuable contribution to make. He shows clearly that each patient should be treated as an individual, the changes in environment and the tasks given being adjusted to the particular case.

There is a report on 100 patients treated by active psychotherapy in Berlin before the war. The best results were obtained in cases of reactive depression, anxiety neuroses and hysteria. In reactive depression and the anxiety neuroses the recovery rate was approximately 50 per cent. One may doubt whether these results compare favourably with patients treated by hospitalization and physical methods of treatment combined with psychotherapy. Again, Dr. Herzberg's treatment takes from one to two years, though with decreasing frequency of attendance, against in-patient treatment of two to six months.

This book gives many useful practical hints and there are some excellent case-studies. The psychological background is rather elementary. It is a book worth reading.

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Aviation Neuro-Psychiatry. By R. N. IRONSIDE, M.B., F.R.C.P., and I. R. C. BATCHELOR, M.B. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone, Ltd., 1945. Pp. viii + 168. Price 8s. 6d.

The foreword explains that the authors' views are based on practical experience in the field and that there had been little opportunity for reference to current opinion. This enhances the interest and value of the book. The peculiar problem of a psychiatrist attached to the R.A.F. is the maintenance of morale and efficiency of a more or less closed unit of highly selected personnel, who however are subjected to exceptional hazards. In tackling this the writers would seem to have combined common sense with sound psychiatric principles. This book will be of particular value to psychiatrists attached to the R.A.F., but with the dispersal of many men from this service other psychiatrists will find that this book will be of help in understanding the difficulties with which ex-flying men had had to contend.

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