

Part II.—Reviews.

An Outline of Medical Psychology. By E. FRETSON SKINNER, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. London: H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd., 1939. Pp. viii + 173. Price 6s.

This little book, intended for the non-technical reader and for medical students, is clearly and concisely written. It should prove a useful introduction to some of the facts and hypotheses of modern psychology as applied to the causation of nervous diseases and to their treatment by its means.

Dr. Skinner prefers a physio-psychology. Physiology is, in his opinion, the only sure basis for psychology. In the first section of the book he makes much use of Pavlov's theories, attempting to explain all mental phenomena on materialistic lines. In the second section he passes on to psycho-pathology. Here such matters as the unconscious, dream psychology, the psycho-pathology of everyday life and the evolution of the sexual instinct are dealt with. The author's bias is strongly Freudian and his exposition is on psycho-analytical lines.

The final section describes the psycho-pathology, clinical features and the treatment of the psycho-neuroses. It is stressed that anxiety is the primary neurosis, and that anxiety states account for some 60% of all neurotic illness. Hysteria, obsessional states, perhaps even the psychoses, are secondary conditions. They are maladjustments as their aim is to avoid the anxiety and fear reaction. Hysterical and obsessional symptoms can often be removed only to expose the original underlying anxiety state. Until the basic cause for this is found and readjustment achieved the patient will relapse.

In a chapter on therapy, Dr. Skinner points out that one-third of all certified illness in this country is of the neurotic type. If properly treated it holds out excellent prospects of cure. It is, therefore, a matter of great economic importance. By contrast, cerebral tumour and disseminated sclerosis are of purely academic interest. They are comparatively rare and treatment, up to the present, is of little economic value.

Most of us would agree with the author that it is unfortunate that in the teaching schools a disproportionate amount of time is devoted to conditions of purely academic interest.

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Superstition and Society. Psycho-analytical Epitomes No. 3. By R. MONEY KYRLE. London: Hogarth Press. Pp. x + 163. Price 4s. 6d.

Money-Kyrle provides an excellent introduction to psycho-analytical findings in the field of anthropology. His main sources are Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, Abraham's *Dreams and Myths*, Rank's *Myth of the Birth of the Hero* and Roheim's many important contributions.

A parallel is drawn between primitive customs, superstitions and so on and psycho-pathological phenomena. The myth and the dream are found to have much in common. Here Greek mythology is chosen for illustration, and it is