

impossible. In the penultimate chapter some rather naïve distinctions are drawn between the dreams of the "analysed", the "unanalysed", and the "normal person".

The above criticisms are not directed particularly against the present work; they are not even peculiar to dream-interpretation. They are the two inevitable objections met with when trying to assess the value of interpreting unconscious activity, no matter what the nature of the product. The author is to be congratulated upon producing a worthy addition to an already distinguished psychological library.

STANLEY M. COLEMAN.

The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence. By ANNA FREUD. London: The Hogarth Press, 1937. Pp. x + 196. Price 9s.

In this book Anna Freud attempts to classify the various defence mechanisms utilized by the ego according to the specific anxiety situations which call them into being. Three of these situations, objective anxiety, super-ego anxiety and instinctual anxiety, are isolated. Super-ego anxiety forms the basis of neurosis in adults, and analysts have been long familiar with the various defence mechanisms taken by the ego. The author is a specialist in child analysis; the clinical material is obtained from her studies of children, and in consequence it is with the other two anxiety situations that she is mainly concerned. Objective anxiety, the fear of some external danger, is characteristic of the child before the super-ego has come into being. The classical example is little Hans and his horse phobia. The various defence mechanisms, denial in phantasy, restriction of ego-activity and identification with the aggressor, are described in detail and fully illustrated from case-material. The third anxiety situation, which the ego has to guard against, depends upon a quantitative factor, the strength of the instincts. This quantitative change, a sudden accession of instinctual energy, occurs, owing to physiological reasons, at puberty and the climacteric, and also for pathological reasons at the beginning of one of the periodic advances which occur in the psychosis. Here only instinctual anxiety at puberty is investigated, the last section of the book being devoted to the psychological phenomena which signalize the advent of sexual maturity. Analysts, as the author points out, concentrating on infantile sexuality, have tended to neglect this important subject. In the reviewer's opinion Anna Freud's brilliant exposition amply fills this gap.

STANLEY M. COLEMAN.

Bronchial Asthma and the Nervous System [*Asma Bronchiale e Sistema Nervoso*]. By LUIGI TARGON. Padua: R. Zannoni, 1938. Pp. 126. Price 20 lire.

The book presents in an interesting manner the theory that bronchial asthma is a conditioned reflex, and some sound arguments are brought forward to support this view. The literature of asthma and allied conditions is widely discussed.

In the first chapter are discussed the different conditions in which asthma occurs, and the apparent causes are divided into three groups—predisposing

facilitating and precipitating. A whole chapter is devoted to the physiology of the respiratory and bronchomotor centres, and another to the physiology of reflex action. Next, the recent literature on the part played by the nervous system in the production of immunity and anaphylaxis is discussed, and the eosinophilia, disturbance of acid-base equilibrium and the other conditions which may be associated with asthma are linked up. It is interesting to read, in passing, of the rarity of asthma in both epilepsy and schizophrenia.

In his remarks on allergy the author points out that—

- (a) Asthma occurs in the absence of specific allergens.
- (b) In cases with a positive skin reaction not every attack is due to the specific allergen.
- (c) Allergy explains only some cases of bronchial asthma.

He draws attention also to the fact that only certain tissues appear to be involved in allergic states, e.g., the respiratory tract from the nose to the bronchi, the alimentary canal, bile-ducts, joints, conjunctiva and skin. The connection between these tissues can be seen in the fact that asthma, urticaria and polyarthritides may follow one another.

In discussing the bronchial innervation, attention is drawn to the predominance of spasm in some asthmatic attacks and secretion in others, and to the occurrence of both types at different times in the same individual. One is, of course, due to vagal predominance and the other to sympathetic.

Special attention is paid to the claims of Metalnikov to have shown that an immunological reaction may be evoked in rabbits as a conditioned reflex. That is to say, if an external stimulus, for instance heat, pin-prick, or scratching the ear, be repeatedly applied at the same time that an antigen is injected, ultimately the application of the external stimulus alone, without the antigen, will produce leucocytosis, peritoneal reaction and the appearance of agglutinins in the blood. Accepting this claim, the author develops his theory that the nature of the defensive reaction to an external stimulus has been determined by the introduction of an internal stimulus, and proceeds to discuss the nature of this internal stimulus in the causation of natural asthma. He refers to the published work of others who claim that the origin, persistence and disappearance of conditioned reflexes can be influenced by altering the endocrine balance. In dogs, for instance, it is said that thyroid extract will produce a transient inhibition of conditioned reflexes followed by a longer period of increased excitability.

That the nervous system plays a direct part in the production of allergy and allied conditions is shown by the fact that under the influence of a narcotic drug an animal in a state of allergy does not react to the introduction into it of the specific allergen. It is no great step now for the author to postulate some alteration in the vegetative nervous system, including the endocrine glands, as the factor which determines abnormal responses to external factors, so that a minimal stimulus will elicit a violent response. He regards the asthmatic constitution as a predisposition to fix and perpetuate the requisite conditioned reflexes. The asthmatic attack is regarded as a conditioned reflex, and the type of attack is determined by the particular vegetative nervous mechanisms facilitated by the original exciting cause.

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