

THE SCOPE OF CHILD-PSYCHOTHERAPY.

By Dr. C. BOENHEIM,
Great Britain.

CHILD psychotherapy must be founded on modern depth-psychology. Exact *structure-analysis* is the condition for therapy. Here we have to consider the following essential facts in childhood development :

(1) The *changes* affecting a child's life, which are as a consequence of development itself, demand *reserve* in considering the treatment ; confidence in the strength of Nature's own curative powers.

(2) The *connection* of many nervous disorders with *physiological development* demands consideration of the *symptom*, as well as general psychotherapy.

Examples.—Food intake : Anorexia, vomiting. Development of cleanliness : Enuresis. Development of speech : Stuttering.

(3) The *connection* of psychic disorders with disorders of *mental development* demands combination of psychotherapy with *educational methods*.

Examples.—General disorders of development ; special disorders (e.g., those of reading and writing).

(4) *Suggestibility and plasticity* have to be used *consciously* in therapy instead of unconsciously.

Examples.—Disorders with short vicious circle, young children.

(5) *Facility for training aids* : *Learning*, if functions are retarded ; *un-learning*, if functions are wrong ; *deconditioning*.

Examples.—Bad habits, enuresis, tic.

(6) *Child's dependency on environment* demands : *Investigation* of surroundings ; estimation of constitution and environment ; contact with parents and school ; treatment of parents, if necessary ; change of surroundings.

These points of view lead to modifications of therapy.

(7) Further essential considerations concerning *form and content of psychotherapy* : Education and analysis—differences of approach ; possibilities and advantages of making unconscious facts conscious ; play therapy and word therapy—age as factor ; use of dream-interpretation ; use of drawing and painting ; orthodoxy not corresponding to the manifoldness of psychic variations.

(8) *Prophylaxis* as programme for the *future* : Prevention of neuroses, of juvenile delinquency ; economic considerations.