

Book Reviews

PROFESSOR STRÖMGREN

Contributions to Psychiatric Epidemiology and Genetics. By ERIK STRÖMGREN. Copenhagen: Munksgaard. 1968. Pp. 86. Price D.Kr. 22·00.

Professor Erik Strömgen is one of the most erudite and thoughtful psychiatrists of the day. He is well known in this country as professor of psychiatry at the University of Aarhus, editor of the *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* and productive author in three languages. Probably few of us can read his textbook of psychiatry in Danish, but it is highly regarded in Scandinavia and is now in its eighth edition. Strömgen's training in psychiatric genetics was apparent in his early monograph, 'Beiträge zur Psychiatrischen Erblehre', published more than thirty years ago, and many English-speaking psychiatrists are familiar with his comprehensive review on 'Statistical and Genetical Population Studies Within Psychiatry' which appeared in the Proceedings of the First International Congress of Psychiatry in the early fifties.

The breadth and depth of Strömgen's interests are well illustrated by the six papers in this volume, most of which have been published elsewhere. Their common denominator is psychiatric epidemiology—a term which the author has come to accept with some reluctance—and their aim is 'to contribute to a better international understanding in parts of this area.' Whether discussing the definition of a psychiatric case, the aetiology of schizophrenia or the studies of psychiatric morbidity on the island of Samsø, he is consistently lucid and informed. Many British readers, however, will be most intrigued by the full account of the reactive psychoses, a category more favoured in Scandinavia than in most other countries; Strömgen is concerned enough to defend as well as describe this concept, and singles out for mention and reply the critical review of Faergeman's monograph on the subject written by the Editor-in-Chief of this *Journal* in 1964. It is to be hoped that these papers will be widely read and appreciated by many of the people to whom Professor Strömgen refers as his 'Anglo-Saxon colleagues'.

MICHAEL SHEPHERD.

PSYCHOANALYSIS FOR EVERYMAN

What is Psychoanalysis? Edited by WALTER G. JOFFE. London: Baillière, Tindall & Cassell, 1968. Pp. 65. Price 10s.

The Institute of Psychoanalysis holds a short series of public lectures each year, the Winter Lectures, which are later published in book form. The lectures are directed at the interested, non-psychoanalytic listener (or reader).

Three out of five of the 1968 lectures deal with communication: Winnicott with the communication between infants and their mothers, Mrs. Main with communication between parents and children, and Mrs. Balint with communication between husband and wife. The special emphasis in all these lectures is on the variety of levels, conscious and unconscious, verbal and non-verbal, at which communication can take place. The lecture series is completed by an introductory survey of basic psycho-analytic ideas (Sandler) and a discussion of the role of the psychoanalyst in the mental hospital (Freeman).

These lectures, and particularly the permanent record of them, are important in that many people will assess psychoanalysis on the basis of them. They seem to me successful from an interest point of view, and each lecture would undoubtedly make the reader or listener think; but the organization of the series as a whole does not make for clarity of exposition.

A lecture-series is much more effective if it is planned to cover one broad theme. Three of the present lectures had a common topic; the other two seem uneasily tacked on. I can understand the need for some form of introduction to psychoanalysis for the non-technical listener; perhaps Sandler's lecture could be reprinted as a hand-out to avoid the necessity of annually spending one precious lecture period on elementary basic concepts.

The individual articles also lack clarity, and I would criticize most those concerned with communication! So much of the effectiveness of a lecture depends on the speaker's expression, verbal and non-verbal. These three contributors are highly expert, but their lectures are not easy to read. I found it an effort to follow their argument, and I am sure that a layman would have considerable difficulty. There is a need for a rigorous editorial policy. An hour's lecture, published unchanged, seldom reads well.

It is excellent that psychoanalysis should present itself direct to the public in this way, with ample time for a reasoned presentation which is impossible with the mass-media. Having created this opportunity, and a suitable medium, it is essential to pay more regard to the permanent record, which is more important than the lectures themselves.

SIDNEY CROWN.