

Book Reviews

Therapeutic Social Clubs, edited by Joshua Bierer, M.D. Published by H. K. Lewis & Co., Ltd., London, 1948, for the Institute of Social Psychiatry.

This handbook is a collection of essays contributed by the representative members of the various professions connected with the types of therapeutic activity described within its covers. These authors include psychiatrists, psychologists, occupational therapists, social therapists, and art therapists. The purpose of this book is to present a clear picture to the reader of the aim, dynamics, and practical application of the Therapeutic Social Clubs. The handbook clearly serves this purpose, as each contributor has supplied articles covering the dynamics of his specialized contribution to the club in very specific detail and has carefully explained the direction and objective to be accomplished.

The basic philosophy of Alfred Adler's "Gemeinschaft" was the underlying principle upon which the Therapeutic Social Club idea was founded. Feeling the need for social rehabilitation and the gradual acceptance of responsibility by the patient within the mental hospital as a necessary portion of the psychotherapeutic treatment, the originator of the clubs, who is the editor of the handbook, introduced the first of their kind at Runwell Hospital, Essex, England, a decade ago. It was purely experimental but the growth and development of the concept, as described within the pages of the little book, clearly indicates the validity of its purpose as a therapeutic medium. It has, in the course of time, spread to out-patient clinics and to the continuation of the group as a Social Club unit among discharged patients. Its prophylactic powers are demonstrated by the fact that innumerable people, unaware of the need for social adjustment, have participated in these latter groups and have accepted activities and opportunities thus offered as grateful additions to their programs of living. It has worked with marked success especially with the families of patients as a means of educating them to accept and help the individual member under treatment.

The members of the club consisted, originally, of patients of both sexes, suffering from a variety of disturbances, who were brought into the group in an effort to promote an introduction to social readjustment. Bringing these people back to a community setting and attempting to make them responsible for the success of the club was a new concept in psychotherapy. The psychiatrist, psychologist, occupational therapist, were in attendance as contributors to the group and were ready to help out in any situation, but the members, or patients, ran the club, planned the activities, and assumed full responsibility for its continuation.

The success of the venture can now be judged more clearly by the fact that the concept of Therapeutic Social Clubs has spread to many mental hospitals and out-patient clinics. Many of the clubs have been in existence for a number of years and the continuous growth of the Social Club idea is a testimonial in behalf of its value in the field of psychotherapy.

The numerous contributions contained in this handbook explain in detail, not only the history of the movement, but also its basic philosophy, and the operation of the clubs within the mental hospital, in out-patient clinics and those of discharged former patients. Each contributor seems to express confidence and pride in working with the technique as a valuable instrument and prophylactic tool in the alleviation of the difficulties of the mentally ill. Those who have been privileged to see the Therapeutic Social Clubs in action can testify to the validity of the material published in the book.

LOUISE HERST

Alfred Adler: The Man and His Work, by Hertha Orgler, Daniel Ltd., London, 2d ed. 1947.

This enthusiastic biography, the first edition of which appeared in 1938 (simultaneously with Phyllis Bottome's *Biography of Adler*) is prefaced by Neil R. Beattie, M.D., the President of the new Adlerian Society of Great Britain.

Orgler, a great friend and student of Adler's, gives a vivid and detailed picture of the man, his development and his achievements; the book can, moreover, be considered as a good text-book on Adler's psychology.

This book, to the first edition of which the English press paid high tribute, addresses itself to the general reader who will find it most valuable. It contains much important material for the future biographers of the "social genius of our time," as Manes Sperber called Adler in his biographical essay of 1926.

PAUL PLOTKE