NEUROSES AND PSYCHONEUROSES.


Primarily a longitudinal section of the sexual life is sketched out on Freudian lines. The pathological significance of masturbation is manifest in the third period of sexual development, viz., during and following the period of puberty. The harmful effects may be summed up under three headings. Firstly, in the physical field harm may result from excess and from the lack of gratification accompanying the act. The mechanism of the symptoms noted is difficult of explanation. According to Ferenczi, masturbation with fantasy as the chief, if not the only, stimulant, is an insufficient discharging mechanism for the excitations aroused. It still is difficult to understand the incidence of morbidity and some individual predisposition must be predicated. Secondly, because of the excessive fantasy formation, there is the danger that an individual so occupied will exert no effort to bring about changes in the external world, demanded by, and commensurate with, reality. Fantasy will form the main source of gratification and its prolongation into adult life adds to the difficulties under which the individual labours to renounce this form of gratification. Thirdly, masturbation, if it persists during and after adolescence, will tend to bring about a fixation of sexual aims and the persistence of psychosexual infantilism. With this condition established, the handicapped individual has the predisposition to neurosis well-established. Lastly, as pathological results, certain character traits will likely be noted. The chronic masturbator carries with him a feeling of guilt and fear of discovery. He becomes asocial, over-serious, too conscientious, and the feeling that he is dishonest impels him to exhibit a fanaticism for honesty, virtue, and uprightness. C. S. R.


Following upon a survey of the development of industrial psychology showing the circumstances leading up to the study of the nervous temperament, the author deals with the historical background of the problem and the motives which have led to its continued existence as a problem. After recounting contemporary work done from the physiological aspect, Miss Smith's own investigations are recorded. She concludes that from the point of view of health and successful work, the diagnosis and treatment of the nervous person are important. She shows that nervous people on the average tend to have more sick leave, to be less efficient, and to suffer more from conditions that are neutral to others and, in some occupations, to develop an occupational cramp. Just as some people are physically unfitted for certain occupations and are
therefore kept out, and some are too intelligent or too unintelligent for some work, so there are people temperamentally unsuited for particular conditions, and they should be diverted into occupations suitable for them. C. S. R.

PSYCHOSES.


The author thinks that pathological changes of structure occur in the nervous system from the first days of the illness and that this can be recognized during life by encephalography and examination of the fluid. These changes consist of lesions in the meninges which are inconspicuous and variable, degenerative changes in the vessels, in the nerve-cells, in the glia and in the nerve fibres. The most characteristic changes are the areas of disintegration like bunches of grapes on which the author has done so much work. The lesions are focal and widely disseminated, chiefly in the cortex but also in all parts of the brain. The cortical lesions may occur anywhere but chiefly in the frontal lobe and in the third cortical layer. Regenerative processes also occur.

The nature of the lesions and their irregular distribution account for the irregularity of symptoms. Their predilection for the third stratum accounts for the intellectual-emotional dissociation, and the extracortical lesions for the catatonia.

The author concludes that though still unknown the cause of dementia praecox is a pathological problem and not constitutional.

R. G. G.


After briefly reviewing the main current views of the causation of dementia praecox, the writer states that as a result of his experience of its peculiar prevalence among the Parsis of Bombay, he is convinced that in-breeding is an important factor. Since the Parsis left Persia in the eighth century, the intermarriage of cousins has been not only common but usual. Among the last 150 cases of mental disorder among Parsis the author has met with, no less than 76 were cases of dementia praecox. This singular prevalence is specially noticeable as the disease is comparatively rare among Hindus, who constitute by far the largest section of the population, and rarer still among Mohammedans.