examination was carried out every three days, and a slow improvement became evident. After she had been in hospital about a month, she was able to understand vowels and syllables shouted directly into the ear.

The author regards the deafness as due to a toxic acoustic neuritis rather than to a direct implication of the eighth nerve by the trichinae.

M. C.


A case of this condition is fully described; it consists of painful paresthesiae in the area supplied by the external femoral cutaneous nerve. Since the affection is chronic and may recur even after the divided nerve has regenerated, the author advises section of the nerve above Poupart's ligament and avulsion of the distal end by a technique which he describes.

R. G. G.

PROGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.


Meningitis is one of the most fatal complications of fracture of the skull. Nevertheless the authors are able to bring forward three cases which recovered. In the first case coliform bacilli were found in the cerebrospinal fluid; in the second case haemolytic streptococci, while in the third the fluid, although purulent, remained sterile. In the first and third cases a fixation abscess produced by an injection of turpentine appeared to have a beneficial effect.

J. G. G.

Psychopathology.

NEUROSES AND PSYCHONEUROSES.


This study was of 3,000 children of both sexes, ranging from one to seventeen years of age. An examination of the data showed that fingernail biting under the age of three does not occur. The tendency first begins to manifest itself during the fourth year, rises slightly in the next, and then suddenly jumps up at age six, from which year it maintains a fairly constant level until puberty. At age twelve for girls and age fourteen for boys the percentage once more
rises and continues at a high peak for two years. It then quickly recedes to a very low level at which it continues for the entire adult period.

It becomes apparent that there is some connexion between the incidence of fingernail biting and various periods of psychosexual development. The beginning of nail-biting activity may be expected with gradual increase from the age of three to five. This represents a start at vicarious attempts at genital and onanistic activity. At this age the child is confronted with the Ædipus situation on the one hand and parental prohibitions in regard to manifestations of genital activity as well. The rise at six can be accounted for if we accept fingernail biting as a vicarious onanistic activity. It is an indication of the fact that transition from genital activity to latency is in a large percentage of cases unsuccessful. Fingernail biting in that it affords an outlet for libidinal gratification is accordingly seized upon, and its presence here as at later periods is an indication of the persistence of an unresolved Ædipus situation.

The rise occurs again at puberty when it is expected according to psychoanalytic theory. At this time the Ædipus situation is revived, and the guilt feelings of the infantile sexual period reactivated, prior to its final disposition with the acquisition of adult sexuality. With this disposition a rapid fall in the incidence of fingernail biting is to be expected and that is what is actually observed.

In view of the large percentage of children who bite their nails (between ages of six and sixteen, in the vicinity of 30 per cent.), certainly in its milder form, the habit cannot be looked upon as pathological. Really it is not a habit but a symptom, a symptom of the persistence of the unresolved Ædipus situation. All efforts at reducing it, based on the psychology of habit-formation, are considered by the writer doomed to failure. The only way to treat nail-biting, as in the case of any other condition, is to attack the cause and not the symptom itself.

C. S. R.


In a clinical survey of the population of Chicago the distribution of children's behaviour problems appears to be for the most part independent of size of family. In a small rich community, families in which there is only one child may produce problem children more frequently than other size family groups, but this finding is true only of boys; girls do not appear to be often recognized as problems in such districts. In a large city boys come to the attention of the psychiatrist more than twice as often as girls; and the first-born child is a problem child relatively more frequently than children in any other ordinal position. This holds after allowance has been made for the fact that there are
more first-born children in the community. The second-born child is a behaviour deviate relatively more frequently than children in other ordinal positions only when a small high grade community is studied. The sex of the sibling nearest in age to the problem child may have a bearing upon the incidence of these problem children. The only child does not appear to be a spoiled child as frequently as children from two-children families—if one accepts personality and emotional difficulties as the outward manifestations of a spoiled child. Only children are troubled more by scholastic difficulties than children with brothers and sisters. The only child commits more acts of delinquency than children with one brother or sister. But most delinquents appear in very large families where economic and social conditions are more important than family inter-relationships.

C. S. R.

PSYCHOSES.


Among 130 subjects of dementia praecox a group of 18 was diagnosed as suffering from thyroid deficiency. Of these 16 received thyroid treatment. Significant mental improvement followed in 14 or 88 per cent. of the cases and five became well enough to go home. In the control group of 41 patients receiving similar treatment the incidence of significant improvement was 34 per cent. There was probably some degree of thyroid deficiency in various subjects of the control group, since 31 were recorded as showing 'endocrine deficiency unclassified.' A considerable number of the control subjects received other than thyroid medication which probably contributed to the improvement shown. In general, cases presenting a favourable initial prognosis were excluded from treatment. The results of the study are interpreted as indicated that thyroid deficiency plays a significant role in more than ten per cent. of state hospital cases of dementia praecox and that in properly selected cases thyroid medication in adequate dosage and for a sufficiently prolonged period results in significant improvement. On the other hand, relatively little success is to be anticipated from thyroid medication in cases selected at random.

C. S. R.

[27] Unconditioned and conditioned reactions to pain in schizophrenia.—Lauretta Bender and Paul Schlder. Amer. Jour. of Psychiat., 1930, x, 365.

The reaction to pain in catatonics is usually said to be awkward, incomplete or absent. A series of sixteen cases were experimented with by the use of a simple electrical apparatus to see if it would be possible to build up a condi-