the lower than in the upper limbs. English surgeons, however, have found no such difference, and in some cases (Sargent, Stopford) voluntary contraction of the gastrocnemius returned four or five months after suture of the sciatic nerve at or above the middle of the thigh.

This is one among many controversial statements made by Perret, whose experience of war surgery was naturally not great enough to enable him to criticize the statements of French and German surgeons. The paper is, in fact, chiefly a review of the work of others, and as such is of considerable interest.

J. C. Greenfield.

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Psychopathology.

PSYCHOLOGY.


In this paper the way in which the interaction of primitive man and his environment are reflected in the psychic life of the individual and society is discussed.

Totemism is defined as the belief in the existence of a specific magico-religious connection between a human group and a natural species. It seems probable that primitive beliefs are the expression in the language of unconscious symbolism of the unity which connects human life with nature. Primeval man projects the endopsychical knowledge of the existence of a biological connection between man and his environment into the belief in a magical bond between a clan and a natural species.

Reasons are given which make it probable that primitive man regarded the world surrounding him as a second womb, and that his unconscious apperception of space is based on the experiences of antenatal life. The totem clan does not connect the child which belongs to it with the womb from which he was born, nor with the man who gave him life, but with a given locality.

An ambivalent attitude toward the place of birth and also in relation to the grave is noted. The inhibition of the primary desire for the undisturbed bliss of the maternal womb compels man to lead a roaming life; the return of the repressed elements, although the wish-fulfilment has been transferred from the original object to a symbolic substitute (Mother Earth instead of the real mother), changes man from the wanderer to the sedentary husbandman. It seems as if the primeval cave-dweller must have been led by a blind impulse to seek for a place in which he could live again his prenatal life. In the lowest tribes the death-place is avoided for many years; in the higher tribes the desire to remain in contact with the grave incites them to resist the inroads of strangers into their territory.

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The origin of certain concepts of space belongs to the common heritage of mankind. Many examples are given which show that what is higher is regarded as stronger and nobler. The heavens in every religion are supposed to be the home of the gods. The phantastic presentations of a medieval hell are in reality repressed sexual wish-fulfilments, and hell itself is but one of the lower cavities of the body (vaginal or anal).

C. W. Forsyth.


Attention is drawn to the theory of the identity of hunger and sexual libido, and that in mental regression the nutritional libido may serve sexual ends, or the sexual libido may appear as purely nutritional strivings. A brief account is given of a case where the hunger feeling was a sort of compulsive symbolic expression of an unsatisfied sexual craving. Cannon's theory of hunger will not alone account for psychic hunger, which may be a sort of regression to the asexualized libido of early life. Stekel has pointed out an analogy between love and hunger. Dreams of eating as symbolic sexual expressions of the unconscious are frequent in the neuroses, and Coriat believes that they symbolically represent a means of utilization of another crotogenetic zone, one that is not repulsive to social conventions, as a means of harmlessly securing sexual gratification. The myth of the Garden of Eden is nothing but the unconscious expression of a composite phantasy of childhood, and in its symbolic projection there is a strong linking of eating and nakedness and a feeling of sexual shame. As Freud states, "since bed and board constitute marriage, the former is often put for the latter in the dream, and as far as practicable this sexual presentation-complex is transposed to the eating-complex." The dream of eating together is often a symbol of sexual intercourse, and in certain savage tribes, food, marriage, and ideas of conception are intimately related. In the snake dance of the Hopi Indians we see an example of primitive symbolic thinking of the identification of food and sexual fertility. Sexual symbolisms hidden under the guise of food are quite common in modern society, and the frequent impulse of neurotics to gag or vomit is merely a reaction of disgust towards sexual relations transferred to the food-crotogenetic zone. The essential feature of the neuroses with strong somatic symptoms of hunger is the damming up of the sexual libido, and there often occurs the so-called 'air-hunger', the difficulty of breathing in the anxiety states, or the globus, as a displacement of actually repressed erotic sensations.

C. Stanford Read.


A commonplace observation in psychiatry is the presence of extraordinary beliefs with regard to one or two subjects on the part of a patient whose judgement and mental vigour are otherwise excellent. This cannot conceivably be due to gross disease of the brain, and to explain it we must consider the reasoning processes of the so-called normal. Many such have
absurd beliefs, but these are not regarded as unusual by the public, because the causes of these beliefs are obviously the result of some passion or desire. The author describes a case at length, and shows that the delusions of this patient are really founded on passions and desires just as are the ‘normal’ false beliefs. This patient was seclusive and shy, principally as a result of the circumstances of his childhood, and also because he was somewhat deaf. This seclusiveness was not the result of his own wish; indeed the patient strongly resented it, and developed two strong desires, namely, the desire for companionship and the desire for revenge on those who seemed to rebuff and insult him. He therefore developed a belief in ‘a spirit doctor’ who looked after him, defended him from the unsympathetic world, and punished his enemies. Absurdities of belief give rise to absurdities of conduct, and in his desire for recreation he went into trances in which he boxed, fenced, sang, and danced under the benevolent direction of the spirit doctor. These soon led to visual and auditory hallucinations, and visions of various sorts began to appear after he had suffered financial losses. These were compensatory for the deprivations which he underwent as a result of his shyness, and also as the result of the loss of money whereby he might have gratified his desires. He also had hallucinations of sexual scenes which represented his own desires inhibited by his ‘moral sense’. He got out of this conflict by disclaiming responsibility and projecting them as the conduct of others. Auditory hallucinations occurred which were clearly the result of the superimposition of mental images on sensory impressions. This is a perfectly normal occurrence, for no perception is a pure sensory impression, but is always tinged by memory images, though normally any errors which arise from this are corrected by critical judgement. However, if this error is in accordance with expectation, or if the mind at the time is dominated by an emotion such as fear or anger, or still more if it is in accordance with our wishes, criticism will be in abeyance. In the deaf patient, head noises were easily construed as utterances of the spirit doctor which coincided with his own desires.

Why, then, do beliefs depend on passions and desires? Human beliefs doubtless developed in accordance with their utility; and while it is usually the case that utility coincides with truth, this is not always so. It will be to the advantage of an individual if his beliefs coincide with his strivings, and the man who believes his object to be good is more likely to achieve it. Our desires and impulses frequently come into conflict with each other, and a satisfactory mental adjustment consists in so modifying these that they cease to conflict. As a rule the individual tries first to gratify his desires and to make accomplishment fit desires, and it is only when this fails that he tries to fit desires to accomplishments. Contentment is reached when a balance is struck. The Stoics taught to fit desires to accomplishments, but the Epicureans taught to fit accomplishments to desires within certain limits. New countries and young people tried to accept the philosophy of achievement, while old countries and people accept that of resignation, and tend to condemn the former. The success in adjustment in either direction will depend on our beliefs, and if we
believe a thing of little worth we soon curb our desire for it. Another way, however, in which we can get rid of unmanageable desires is by establishing a belief that we have attained what we desired, or that we shall attain it in the future. Normally we are prevented from being led too far from the truth by any belief, by the conflicting desires and beliefs which draw us in the other direction; also by the habitual love of truth founded on the instinct of curiosity; and lastly, the gregarious instinct prevents us from easily setting up our beliefs against those of the herd. Sometimes, however, these checks on the growth of any one belief do not predominate. This is seen temporarily under the influence of a burst of anger, which soon passes; but sometimes it is found that a passion will last for years, and dominate the mind so as to give rise to all sorts of false beliefs. If a man is poor in his habitual love of truth, or if his gregarious instinct is weak, he will more readily establish false beliefs; and it may happen that, as time goes on, the forces which tend to lead him astray gain in strength by making him withdraw from society, and so lose the steadying influence of the herd.

It has been seen, then, that beliefs are established according to their utility, and for this reason it may well be that 'intuitive' beliefs are more serviceable than logical belief. Insomuch as a false belief is never ultimately a useful belief, we may claim that we are establishing a system of beliefs more and more closely approximating to the truth.

R. G. Gordon.

PSYCHOSES.


The writer tilts against the use of the term 'confusional insanity' as only being descriptive of a symptom which may temporarily occur in almost any form of mental disturbance, and deprecates that in the official nomenclature no place for the infective-exhaustive group was found. In the etiology malaria took a prominent part, and other factors of considerable importance were 'heat stroke' and 'heat exhaustion'. Whether pure physical exhaustion can be regarded as of any importance in causation has been much debated. Farrar, Aschaffenburg, and Bonhoeffer denied that there was any such evidence; but Henderson thinks that as a secondary etiological agent, following fever, the factor of exhaustion must still be seriously reckoned with.

Analysis of the author's group of cases confirms the view that the different toxic factors which played a part in their production have given rise to similar symptom-pictures. Delirium was the most frequent and most characteristic of all the symptom-pictures in this group of 115 cases, and comprised 36 per cent. The usual history was one of gradual physical exhaustion, with restlessness, sleeplessness, irritability, headache and giddiness, terrifying dreams, and a feeling of being mixed up in the head. Later, disorientation, illusions, and hallucinations appeared, fear was shown, and suicidal attempts were not uncommon. As fever subsided, convalescence quickly set in. Of the cases, 26 belonged to the irritable,