PSYCHIATRY has the unenviable reputation of containing within its borders an inordinate number of conflicting schools of thought, and of possessing fewer assured and agreed theories than any other branch of medicine. The divergencies of view are not concerned merely with superficial variations in method, but appear to involve fundamental differences in attitude and outlook, between which it is not easy to find any compromise. The most obvious and the widest of the divergencies is that which lies between the physiogenic and psychogenic schools, but each of these major groups includes numerous sections whose conceptions and methods of attack are radically different one from another. Within the physiogenic school are those who are endeavouring to solve the problems of mental disorder along anatomico-physiological, bacteriological, biochemical and endocrinological lines of research. Within the psychogenic school diversity would seem to be extreme. Suggestionists, persuasionists, and analysts put forward theories which appear to follow altogether independent roads. Even amongst the analysts the differences are so radical that their views range from the almost mechanistic conceptions of Freud to the doctrines of Jung, who deliberately passes beyond the confines of science and joins hands with philosophy and ethics.

These conflicts of opinion, outlook, and method are to some extent peculiar to psychiatry, but largely they are a reflection of the corresponding conflicts which exist in psychology. Here again we have on the one hand the mechanistic conceptions of the behaviourists, and on the other the purposive psychology of McDougall. The aim of the former is altogether to exclude the subjective aspect of experience from the material of scientific research, and to build up conceptions on a basis solely of objective facts. It may be said of this school, as Höffding said of its forerunners long before the birth of modern behaviourism, that their endeavour is to abolish psychology in order to make it into a science. For McDougall, at the opposite pole, con-
sciousness and purpose are obvious factors of experience which must necessarily be taken into account and given their full valuation if psychology is to bear any relation to reality.

The fundamental divergence between the physiogenic and psychogenic approach to the problems of mental disorder is probably dependent upon differences which may almost be said to be temperamental and constitutional in the corresponding investigators, and which make it difficult for either group to acquire a sympathetic understanding of the other's views and methods. For the one an attack upon the neuroses and psychoses by the objective weapons of anatomy, physiology and chemistry possesses advantages which are obviously overwhelming. The phenomena can thus be brought into line with the other phenomena of medicine, the investigation can be carried out by methods capable of exact scientific accuracy and verification, and the evidence of a strict causal relationship between organic processes and psychical phenomena furnished by such psychoses as senile dementia and general paralysis produces a confident anticipation that processes of the same order will ultimately be found to provide a complete explanation of all mental disease.

On the other hand the psychologically minded investigators hold that the phenomena of mental disease are of an order which cannot be wholly forced into the framework of mechanistic science without doing violence to their essential characters, they insist that these essential characters can only be satisfactorily embraced by psychological conceptions, and they point to the remarkable success which these conceptions have achieved in explaining the problems of the psychoneuroses, problems which have certainly not hitherto yielded to any attack made upon them by the physiogenic schools.

There can be little doubt that each of these extreme views, in so far as it arrogates to itself the exclusive possession of the only route to knowledge, is putting forward a claim which cannot be justified. Nor can the compromise whereby certain disorders are regarded as psychogenic in their origin, and certain other disorders as physiogenic, provide a finally satisfactory solution. In view of the obvious mental effects in toxic conditions like acute alcoholism, in endocrine deficiencies like cretinism, and in organic brain diseases, particularly the subtle characterological changes capable of being produced by encephalitis lethargica, he would be a bold man who would dare to set a limit to the regions accessible to anatomical, physiological and chemical research. Nevertheless, it must be re-
membered that a naive belief in the absolute validity of the conceptions of mechanistic science and in their applicability to the whole sphere of our experience is no longer compatible with the trend of modern thought. Mechanistic science began as a development of seventeenth century physics, and proved supremely successful in the later growth of that department of knowledge. But biology and psychology have never managed to fit comfortably into its scheme, and latterly physicists themselves have been busily engaged in tumbling over many of their old idols. It is indeed an irony of fate that a determined attempt to force psychology and psychiatry wholly into the domain of mechanistic science should be taking place at a time when the original founders of the latter are struggling uneasily with their fundamental conceptions, and seeking to remodel them.

There are considerable areas of human experience to which the conceptions of materialistic mechanism are inapplicable, or at any rate only applicable by a degree of abstraction which abstracts from the phenomena in question their essential characters. Hence science must either abandon all attempt to deal adequately with these areas, or must be prepared to utilise some other approach than the mechanistic. One such other approach lies along the psychological road, and there is every justification for pushing research along that way so far as it promises to add to our knowledge.

It would seem, therefore, that attack upon the problems of mental disorder cannot be constrained within too narrow a front, and that the best hope of progress lies in a simultaneous advance along every likely avenue. The physiogenic and psychogenic schools must each be allowed to proceed with its own weapons, and advance will not be retarded by the acquirement of a sense of perspective which will carry with it toleration and sympathetic insight for the labours of others.

A similar plea for perspective and toleration is even more applicable to the divergencies existing within the psychogenic school, because the divergencies here are necessarily less fundamental. Nobody suggests that the different lines of approach followed by the anatomical, physiological and chemical investigators are mutually destructive, or that one of them must be right and the others wrong. It is at least possible that the variations within the psychogenic schools are of the same order, and represent different but not incompatible attempts at the solution of the problems. To some extent this is certainly the actual state of affairs, and it is not difficult to show
that the theories of analysts, suggestionists, and persuasionists are attacks at different levels rather than essentially conflicting interpretations.

No doubt all these divergent approaches indicate an imperfect knowledge, and their unification in a single system of universally valid conceptions would be very desirable. But the achievement of such a unification is at present only a remote possibility even in sciences far more advanced than psychiatry, and its advent will not be hastened by the pretence that it has already been attained.