NEUROLOGY

PROGNOSIS AND TREATMENT


Knowledge of human genetics has not the precision or amplitude which would warrant the sterilization of people who themselves are normal in order to prevent the appearance, in their descendants, of manic-depressive psychosis, dementia praecox, feeblemindedness, epilepsy, criminal conduct. An exception may exist in the case of normal parents of one or more children suffering from certain familial diseases, such as Tay-Sachs amaurotic idiocy. There is at present no sound scientific basis for sterilization on account of immorality or character defect. Until and unless heredity can be shown to have an overwhelming importance in the causation of dangerous antisocial behaviour, sterilization merely on the basis of conduct must continue to be regarded as a 'cruel and unusual punishment.' Nothing in the acceptance of heredity as a factor in the genesis of any condition considered by this Report excludes the environmental agencies of life as equally potent and, in many instances, as even more effective. Sterilization can only be recommended in selected cases of certain diseases and with the consent of the patient or those responsible for him. It may be considered in Huntington's chorea, feeblemindedness of familial type, schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis, and epilepsy. It is to be stressed that no great or radical change in the complexion of society can thus be expected.

C. S. R.


Subcutaneous injection, as well as intramuscular or intravenous injections, of betaxin 1 (Bayer) gave good results in cases of polyneuritis. Betaxin 1 is a crystallized vitamin B1. Improvement was also obtained by injections of betaxin 1 in various diseases of the central nervous system—e.g. tabes dorsalis, subacute combined degeneration, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and disseminated sclerosis.

M.

PSYCHOLOGY


An attempt has been made to show that some of the traditional arguments that have been advanced to prove the solitariness of genius per se are not
strongly convincing. A study of case-histories would not appear to lend support to any dogmatic pronouncement that men of genius are characterized by solitary traits, although it does seem justifiable to conclude that in some (perhaps many) geniuses there is a decided propensity to solitude and seclusion. This, however, does not seem to involve an innate disposition; rather, it would appear that the tendency can be accounted for on the basis of conditioning. Solitude is not the goal of genius but its refuge. Aloofness is frequently the result of a shrinking from the deteriorating standards of society. The genius is not only constantly forced into solitary retreat, but he sometimes seeks seclusion voluntarily and deliberately because as he associates with mankind he senses the advantages to be gained from insulating himself from the masses. In some instances contempt for society among men of genius may be the result of an attempt to compensate for a feeling of social inferiority.

C. S. R.

PSYCHOSES


Traumatic psychoses are rare, as in the Danvers State Hospital over a period of 16 years they numbered only one-half of 1 per cent. of first admissions. The factor of overindulgence in alcohol had a definite relationship both to the causation of the accident and to the adjustment of such patients after leaving the hospital. The type of injury sustained seemed to play an important part in the adjustment to former surroundings. The cases of fracture of the skull were less apt to readjust socially than those without fracture and this should be an important consideration in prognosis. The most common of the sequelae appeared to be: continued irritability; headache; giddiness; and, to a lesser extent, irresponsibility, with impaired judgement. In the deteriorative forms, there was found immaturity and disturbances of the intellectual faculties. It would seem that only a small proportion of head-injury cases develop psychoses. It is well known, however, that they do not escape entirely from mental or nervous defects and that a large number develop neuroses, which ordinarily remain as such and do not develop into psychoses.

C. S. R.


One hundred cases of prison psychosis were investigated as to the content of the hallucinations. Such hallucinations are symptomatic of a state of fear,