

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF THE DISORDERS OF ADOLESCENCE.

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THE problem of puberty can be regarded as the problem of functional psycho-somatic disharmony. The solution cannot lie exclusively in the field of mind or of body, because we are dealing not solely with psychic structures which are undergoing reshaping in their own right, but with the processes of maturation in the somatic field. The vector of normal growth lies somewhere within the parallelogram of these two forces. On this analogy, the presence of negative agencies must be stressed when we consider the repressive forces of the mind, and the return to primitive physiological responses as in schizophrenic reactions.

The recapitulation theory of the psycho-analytic school is so far correct inasmuch as it explains the recrudescences of infantile reaction patterns at adolescence. But it does not take into account the normal maturation processes which reach their most intense pitch at this period. Such inco-ordinations as occur at this time are primarily a product of ununified growth processes plus excessive innervation in some types and reduced innervation in others.

There is no point in attributing all such disfunction to psychic initiation. When, however, major psychic issues have, up-to-date, been in cold storage unresolved, they are now activated by the heightened dynamics of sexual demands which arouse in the mind individual and social obligations.

Experience goes to show that there are two main types of disordered adolescent, the constitutionally sexual insufficient, and the acquired psychically disturbed. Up to puberty the fine shades of sexual differences, the intra-sexual varieties pass largely unnoticed; even morphometric studies fail to establish striking differentia except in the clear-cut hermaphrodites; but at puberty these make their appearance and allow for metric estimation. The appearance of homosexuality overt and disguised cannot be lightly dismissed as solely due to the recrudescence of infantile fixations which contribute to this problem. The schizophrenic and paranoic problems are problems of psycho-sexual inadequacies clustering round the nucleus of sexual inversion. Of this constitutional group, not all fall victims to major psychosis, and it is this large group which present the great difficulties in treatment. These can be grouped

in the usual clinical classes where they present anxiety, hysterical and obsessional symptoms and can be treated accordingly. But there are many others who are misfits in the family, and/or in their cultural milieu. Then there are those who accept apparently their relation to the family and to the community, but are still the "sensitives" whose "*sturm und drang*" is a tempest inside themselves.

This group presents a problem to the home, to the school, to industry and to society.

Every adolescent has the capacity for sin and saintliness to a high degree, and therapy of this character divergence will depend in some measure on our concept of social norms.

This type is discussed in the light of the cultured ideals of adolescents, examples of poetry being given as clues to this problem.