

A report of the meeting appears in this number of the Journal, and it will there be seen that a resolution was passed unanimously to the effect that the Asylum Visiting Committees (with such additions as the Act requires) should be the committees for carrying out the provisions of the Mental Deficiency Act, and that there should be no disturbance of the statutory powers now held by the existing visiting committees under the Lunacy Act.

In this connection the members of the Association will doubtless be interested in the proposals for fresh legislation which have been made by the London County Council, and there is, accordingly, published at page 174 an extract from the London County Council (General Powers) Bill.

Part II.—Epitome of Current Literature.

1. Physiological Psychology.

Why Psycho-analysis is Interesting [*Das Interesse an der Psychoanalyse*].
(*Scientia*, Nos. 5 and 6, 1913.) Freud, S.

In an admirably simple, luminous, and concise manner, Freud here presents in some twenty pages all the chief aspects of psycho-analysis. (For some unexplained reason the first part of the paper is in German, and the second in French.)

As examples of diseased conditions to which psycho-analytic therapy may be applied, he names hysterical attacks and manifestations of inhibition, as well as neurosis of obsession in action or idea. They are conditions which sometimes tend to spontaneous cure, and are liable to be obscurely affected by the personal influence of the physician. In the severer psychoses psycho-analysis can effect nothing. Yet even here it can furnish, for the first time in the history of medicine, an insight into origin and mechanism.

Putting aside the medical interest of psycho-analysis, there are many phenomena of mimicry and speech, found both in normal and diseased persons, which psychology has hitherto neglected. Such are lapses of speech, of writing, and of memory, and dreams. For these various unsatisfactory pathological or physiological explanations have been sought. Psycho-analysis has shown that they may be explained on purely psychological grounds, and has thus narrowed the sphere of physiology and appropriated a large section of pathology for psychology. Normal, and so-called pathological processes have been shown to follow the same laws. Freud proceeds to refer in more detail to lapses and to dreams. Lapses of speech or memory are to be regarded, not as the result of mere momentary distraction, but as having sense, tendency,

and design, and as usually due to a psychic conflict. They furnish the most convenient material available for anyone who wishes to convince himself of the credibility of psycho-analytic conceptions. The usual motive of such lapse is the avoidance of some discomfort. Thus, we may lose an object if we dislike the person who was the giver of it. Memory is not impartial, but seeks to avoid the reproduction of impressions which are associated with unpleasant emotions. We may also forget the name of a person who is not himself unpleasant to us, but in some way suggests unpleasant emotions. There are other motives for lapses. Thus, the loss of a valuable object may be a sacrifice in the hope of propitiating misfortune, thus embodying an ancient superstition which is not consciously accepted. The psycho-analytic explanation of lapses, trifling as such phenomena may seem, to some extent changes our whole conception of the world. The sphere of chance is contracted, and even our awkwardness may be only the mantle which covers our deepest designs.

Even more significant is the psycho-analytic interpretation of dreams. Psycho-analysis has raised dreaming to the level of a psychic act having sense and design, a place in the individual's soul-life. The physical stimuli of dreams are merely the material with which dream-formation works. "Dream-interpretation is the foundation-stone of psycho-analytic work." Its results are the weightiest contribution of psycho-analysis to psychology. Lapses and dreams together have furnished the key to the riddles of the psychology of the neuroses. The dream is the normal image of all psycho-pathological formations. "For him who understands dreaming the psychic mechanism of the neuroses and psychoses is transparent."

This is illustrated by reference to hysterical attacks, which, for psycho-analysts, are the mimic representation of scenes, once lived or imagined, and unconsciously continuing to occupy the patient's imagination. Similarly in obsessional neurosis the patient's apparently unmeaning ceremonials are seen to be, even the most absurd of them, the mirror of the conflicts of life, the struggle between temptation and moral inhibition, the secret wish and the punishment for it. In the stereotyped acts of dementia præcox, again, psycho-analysis sees the survival of intelligible mimic acts expressing the desires which once ruled a patient, whose wildest speeches and postures are susceptible of explanation. So also with the delusions, hallucinations, and systematised ideas of other insane patients. Psycho-analysis brings in law, order, and connection, or at least allows us to suspect their existence. A good half of the psychiatrists' work is thus won for psychology, though it is admitted that, as regards the other half, the influence of organic factors, mechanical, toxic, infectious, must be accepted.

Freud then proceeds to discuss the interest of psycho-analysis for the non-psychological sciences. (a) *Language*: Psycho-analysis concerns the philologist, since the mechanism of language resembles that of dreams; for instance, in being ambivalent, and possessing contradictory meanings; in the employment of symbols also language resembles dreaming. (b) *Philosophy*: Here psycho-analysis affects the current views of the relations between body and mind, and puts the problem of the unconscious on a new basis. In another respect philosophy is

stimulated, for psycho-analysis enables us to establish the psychographies of philosophers and so illuminate their worth. (c) *Biology*: Psycho-analysis especially concerns biology by rendering justice to the sexual function, both in its psychic and in its practical aspects. It has revealed the falsity of the old notion of the asexuality of children, it has demonstrated the existence of an underlying bisexuality, and has played the part of a mediator between biology and psychology. (d) *History of evolution*: Psycho-analysis is essentially concerned with questions of origin and evolution, and its genetic method is capable of wide application, introducing into the study of the psychic life generally the principle that ontogeny repeats phylogeny. (e) *History of civilisation*: In the comparison of the childhood of the individual with the childhood of the race, psycho-analysis furnishes a new instrument of investigation. It enables us to extend to myths and legends the results gained from the study of dreaming, and to understand the transformations which myths undergo; it also sometimes reveals the motives which determine these transformations. It shows how the same complexes which underlie dreams and morbid symptoms may also underlie myths. By a further extension it throws light on the origins of our various great institutions, religion, morality, law. It establishes a relationship between the psychic operation of individuals and of communities, showing how both spring from the same dynamic source. In both cases the chief function of the psychic mechanism consists in a deliverance from tensions engendered by needs. In part the deliverance is effected by the satisfaction of those needs. But in part it is effected by the soothing of needs which cannot be satisfied. "A knowledge of the neurotic affections of individuals is of great service in the comprehension of social institutions, for the neuroses are so many attempts to resolve individually the same problems which are the concern of social institutions." (f) *Fine arts*: Art also is an activity exercised with the aim of appeasing needs which can be satisfied neither in the artist himself, nor in the audience or spectators. "The motor forces of art are the same conflicts which precipitate other individuals into neurosis, and impel society to found its institutions." Psycho-analysis also reveals the hidden sources of artistic activity in the impressions of childhood. (g) *Sociology*: Psycho-analysis shows the normal part which erotic elements play in the social feelings, and reveals the asocial character of the neuroses, the isolation of disease being a substitute for the isolation of the cloister. On the other hand, it shows how excessive social demands are a cause of neurosis. The forces which provoke in the individual the repression of the egoistic instincts are chiefly engendered by docility towards the social claims of civilisation. (h) *Education*: Psycho-analysis is full of interest from the educational point of view. Our amnesia for all that touches on early childhood shows how far removed we are from childhood, and explains the stupefaction with which the revelations of psycho-analysis concerning childhood have been received. When teachers are familiar with the results of psycho-analysis it will be easier for them to accept many puzzling phenomena of childhood, and they will no longer be tempted to over-estimate the importance of seemingly perverse or asocial impulses. They will understand also that any attempt at the violent repression of such impulses can never result in their healthy

domination, but merely in a suppression which sows the seeds of neurotic disorder for future germination. It is only by a gradual sublimation that the asocial tendencies of childhood can be transformed into finer shapes. "Our highest virtues have arisen as reactionary formations and sublimations on the basis of our worst dispositions."

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

Psychiatry as an Aid to Historical Investigation [*Die Psychiatrie als Hilfswissenschaft, auch der Historik*]. (*Neurolog. Ctbltt, Sept. 1st, 1913.*) Näcke.

This posthumously published paper—the last which came from Näcke's pen—had its starting-point in a discussion at a recent Congress of German alienists at Strassburg, on the application of psychiatry to the life of Jesus, a question which has in recent years attracted considerable attention. At the Strassburg meeting Nissl had declared that psychiatry has no concern with history. That dictum Näcke proceeds to investigate.

No science can exist in isolation, and it is inevitable that (as has occurred especially since the work of Moebius in this field) psychiatry should be applied to historical, literary, and artistic personalities and their works, in the construction of so-called "pathographies." No degradation is involved either to medicine or to art, but, on the contrary, a great advantage to both.

We know that every event, whether individual or social, is both endogenously and exogenously determined. To describe the exogenous factors, as displayed in the environment, is the special business of the historian and the economist. But the important, and often even predominant, endogenous factor can only be dealt with by the psychologist and the psychiatrist; here the unaided historian will stumble. When the historian has set forth all that he knows, the psychiatrist alone can decide whether we are concerned with a normal or an abnormal person, although in many cases the evidence may be too defective to enable the decision to be made with certainty, and it has always to be remembered that the insane are often guided by normal motives, and that many morbid motives play their part in the sane. It is only when due weight is given alike to the exogenous and endogenous factors that history becomes truly scientific, and that we can see it in its causal relationships. It is even a matter of justice that we should be able to recognise that supposed exhibitions of wickedness and vice are really the product of a morbid psychic state. Moreover, all sorts of great social movements, such as revolutions and religious outbursts, can only be rightly understood when the psychiatrist has explained those elements and personal agencies in them which are of a morbid character, though we must always be on our guard to avoid the too generous application of pathological nomenclature to complex social movements. The more reckless invasions of psychiatry into these fields must be held in check, not by denouncing them, but by exercising that science in a thoroughly serious and cautious manner. We have to recognise the difficulties in the way, and that most pathographies so far produced must be regarded as tentative, although encouraging.

Returning to the discussion at the Strassburg Congress, Näcke