

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PSYCHOLOGY.

The sixth International Congress of Psychology was held at Geneva from August 3rd to August 7th under the presidency of Prof. Flournoy. It was attended by some 500 representatives from the most various countries. Prof. Claparède, the general secretary, is to be congratulated on the excellence of the general arrangements.

To obviate certain inconveniences of former Congresses it was decided that on this occasion the various papers should be printed in advance, in order that the members might be better prepared to take part in the discussions. The subjects, moreover, were limited to certain definite themes—the proceedings being therefore less disconnected than is usually the case. A certain number of individual communications dealing with subjects other than those officially announced were, however, permitted. The majority of the Sections presented features of more or less interest to alienists—and Psychiatry was well represented. Another innovation was the introduction of Esperanto among the officially recognised languages. A somewhat heated discussion upon the merits of the new language took place in the Terminology Section, but the majority of those present were in favour of its recognition.

The Section dealing with "The Psychology of Religion" was presided over by Prof. Höfding, of Copenhagen. The proceedings were interesting—more particularly the delightful contribution of the Abbé Pacheu—but many of the speakers tended to transgress the limits of the psychological aspect and to wander into metaphysics.

A Section was devoted to the consideration of alleged spiritualistic phenomena—the first time that this subject has been treated in a Psychological Congress. The principal event was a paper by Dr. Alrutz (Upsala) upon Morselli's medium Eusapia Paladibus.

The discussion upon "Tropisms" acquired an added interest from the presence of Prof. Loeb (Berkeley), who first applied the term to the phenomena of animal life. This question has considerable bearing upon psychology, but the conception has not yet become sufficiently definite for any direct application to be made. The discussion showed a great discrepancy of view among the leading authorities.

Prof. Thauzié's paper upon "The Remote Orientation of Pigeons" contained a critical review of the various theories which have been held to account for this remarkable phenomenon. He considers that memory, sight, and increased attention are altogether inadequate to explain the facts—they can, moreover, be excluded by careful experimentation. The hypothesis of a sixth sense is not very illuminating. Prof. Thauzié reaches no definite conclusion, but he is inclined to think that the phenomenon is most probably due to some kind of electro-magnetic action.

In the Section on "The Subconscious," Prof. Dessoir (Berlin) discussed the general conditions under which an element of consciousness can become dissociated from the personality. Dr. Morton Prince (Boston), who has published numerous well-known works dealing with this subject, pointed out that the term subconscious is employed by different authors in very different senses. He proposed that the word should be altogether discarded, and suggested "co-conscious" as a substitute. Co-conscious implies co-activity—that is to say, the activity of certain elements of consciousness which are independent of the ego-complex. Dr. Prince considers that dormant ideas, *i. e.* ideas which are not at the moment active, have no psychic aspect, and should be regarded merely as physiological brain dispositions.

Various short interesting papers were read in the Experimental Psychology Section—and the perennial question of the "Coenesthesia" was dealt with by Mm. Sollier (Paris), Külpe (Würzburg), and Leroy (Paris).

The next Congress of Psychology will be held in America in 1913, under the presidency of Prof. William James.

