

than to point out the fact that the London County Council has inherited, and perhaps exaggerated, an erroneous principle of government, which is tending to produce results that are infinitely more disastrous than the Horton scandal or even the Colney Hatch holocaust.

The question that the London County Council has to consider is whether it will continue to gather the executive power in its own hands or trust it to its medical superintendents; whether it wishes its asylums to be governed on the highest principles of science and human kindness, administered and co-ordinated by highly skilled specialists, or to be controlled by a non-resident official, who knows nothing of an asylum beyond the dry bones of its rules; whether it wishes its institutions to be like musical instruments played by the turning of a handle, becoming with increasing age more and more obnoxious, or to resemble magnificent organs, operated by highly skilled musicians with the most harmonious results.

A change must be made sooner or later, since the logic of events is proving to demonstration that the present system of government of the London County Asylums, as contrasted with all others, may be briefly summed up as the apotheosis of *how not to do it*.

(<sup>1</sup>) See newspaper report, "Notes and News," p. 814.

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## Part II.—Reviews.

*Die Perioden des Menschlichen Organismus in ihrer psychologischen und biologischen Bedeutung* [*The Periodicity of the Human Organism and its psychological and biological significance*]. By Dr. HERMANN SWOBODA. Leipzig and Vienna: Deuticke, 1904. Pp. 135, 8vo.

During recent years a considerable amount of attention has been paid to the periodic and cyclic manifestations of human physiologic processes. The impetus was probably furnished by the discovery that menstruation is in reality a wave that exerts an influence over the processes of the body during the whole month. Perry-Coste's daily observations of pulse rapidity through many years served to show that in men there are weekly, yearly, and perhaps monthly curves in the

heart's pulsations, and somewhat similar rhythms were found by the same observer and by others in extended records of seminal emissions during sleep. Fliess, again, brought forward evidence to show a certain periodicity manifesting itself in congestion of the nasal mucous membrane, and his conclusions, though disputed at the time, have more recently received confirmation.

Dr. Swoboda, of Vienna,—whose investigations have some resemblance to Fliess's, though they are not altogether inspired by that worker—here seeks to discover the phenomena of periodicity in new fields. Previous inquirers had been content to seek physiological rhythms. Dr. Swoboda finds reason to believe that regular periodic recurrence is a mental phenomenon also.

The author, who frequently attends concerts, noticed some eight years ago that while it was very difficult to recall an air immediately after the concert, such sought-for airs seemed to show a tendency to reappear spontaneously on the second day after the concert. When he became interested in the question of periodicity, he investigated his own experiences more carefully and came to the conclusion that it was after an interval of forty-six hours that the mental phenomenon tended to recur. Having thus been put on the track he proceeded to follow it up, interrogating his own experiences and those of his friends. He thus obtained a considerable amount of evidence pointing in the same direction, and not confined to musical reminiscences, but relating also to memories of pictures, voices, pains, etc. He further found evidence pointing to a periodic interval of twenty-three hours, and suspecting another of twenty-three days (twenty-four by twenty-three hours) he reached the conclusion that spontaneous memories tend to recur after an interval of hours represented by some multiple of twenty-three. At this point he became acquainted with the investigations of Fliess, who, in the pathological field, had found a periodicity of twenty-three days. Before long Dr. Swoboda verified such an interval in his musical reminiscences.

Beard had pointed out that any evil results of sexual intercourse are apt to be manifested not immediately but some days after the act. This Dr. Swoboda regards as an anticipation of his own more precise discoveries. Thus he found that in one case attacks of asthma occurred forty-six hours after incomplete coitus, although the subject had no knowledge of the interval.

Dr. Swoboda brings forward the evidence he has obtained and discusses it under various headings. Two chapters deal somewhat elaborately with dreaming, regarded as a field for the occurrence of periodic memories; the author has here found a period of both twenty-three and forty-six days. He also deals at some length with hysteria and neurasthenia, both of which conditions he regards as closely associated with the periodic sexual life. The author foresees a great future for the doctrine of biological periodicity; he believes it will constitute a new science, having the same relationship to astrology as chemistry has to alchemy.

The book contains many interesting facts, and various suggestions likely to arouse thought, as well as, very possibly, fruitful investigation. From a strictly critical point of view, however, it must be pointed out

that much must yet be done before the author's ideas can be accepted without hesitation. The field is necessarily an elusive one to work; it is difficult to apply strictly scientific methods, and the results of coincidence and suggestion are peculiarly apt to intrude themselves. Dr. Swoboda is, however, a pioneer in this new and interesting region, and it is to be hoped that his conclusions will soon be tested by independent workers.

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*Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits.*  
*Volume V. Sociology, Magic, and Religion of the Western Islanders.*  
Cambridge: University Press, 1904. Pp. 378, 4to. Price 25s.

This volume of the Cambridge Expedition's *Reports* consists of eighteen chapters, dealing with such varied and interesting topics as kinship, totemism, birth and childhood customs, initiation, women's puberty customs, courtship and marriage, funeral ceremonies, morals, personal names, land tenure, warfare, etc. These chapters have been contributed in part by Drs. W. H. R. Rivers and C. G. Seligmann, and the late Mr. A. Wilkin, but mainly by Dr. Haddon, the leader of the expedition and the editor of the *Reports*. A subsequent volume will deal in a similar way with the sociology and religion of the eastern islands of Torres Straits.

Like those portions of the *Reports* which have previously been issued, this volume throughout bears evidence of the thorough and scientific spirit in which the expedition worked, and is full of valuable and interesting material which is seldom without psychological bearing, while, at the same time, it is full of instruction in the light it throws on the evolution of society and the path which civilisation has followed, as well as in the evidence it affords of the real social and moral value, the essential reasonableness under their conditions, of institutions and conceptions which have now been left far behind. Thus, in dealing with totemism, Drs. Haddon and Rivers clearly bring out the value of the bond between individuals of the same totem in promoting social sympathy and mental helpfulness. It is probable also that, fantastic as the mystic relationship between a man and his animal totem may seem to us, the idealisation of animal qualities, and the imitation of these involved, was a real stimulus to activity and success under savage conditions of life.

Courtship, marriage, and kinship are studied in an interesting series of papers by several authors. Courtship, it may be noted, was carried on by the women; this system worked well, and gave a certain dignity to the woman's position, and it seems unfortunate that the missionaries have done their best to destroy it. Chastity before marriage was unknown, but so also was unbridled license, and the women made faithful wives. It was not permitted to take women prisoners or to violate them on head-hunting forays, for what we call "savagery" is by no means a constant or even frequent characteristic of savage life. Nearly everything is regulated.