

*An Examination of the Clinico-Pathological Evidence Offered for the Concept of Dementia Præcox as a Specific Disease Entity.* (Amer. Journ. Psychiat., vol. xiii, p. 1039, March, 1934.) Conn, J. H.

After an exhaustive review of the literature on this subject, the author concludes that there are many contradictory opinions on the topic of a uniform anatomical basis to this disorder. There has been no satisfactory correlation between the so-called classical groups of dementia præcox and specific anatomical findings. The same histo-pathological findings which are reported as being specific for these groups are also reported as present in a variety of organic and toxic conditions. Further, there is no uniformity in the clinical views of what constitutes a dementia præcox reaction. The attempts to group these heterogeneous findings into a specific disease entity have proved to be progressively less productive of constructive formulations during a period of fifty years of intensive research.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

*Schizophrenic States in the Functional Psychoses and in Normal Individuals.* (Amer. Journ. Psychiat., vol. xiii, p. 1214, May, 1934.) Page, J., Landis, C., and Katz, S. E.

The concept of the "total personality" has given us a new orientation in the study of mental disease. A questionnaire consisting of fifty typical schizophrenic behaviour traits, as determined by a consensus of psychiatric opinion, was given to 100 manic-depressives, 125 schizophrenics, and 240 normal individuals. The two latter groups averaged about 18 schizophrenic traits, the manic-depressive group averaged only 14 such traits. Analysis of individual traits failed to reveal a dichotomy of personality types underlying schizophrenic and manic-depressive patients. The research throws doubt upon the hypothesis that the "total personality" is basic in the development of the disease syndrome; either the questionnaire method is not a valid mode of checking the hypothesis, or the hypothesis itself is incorrect.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

*The Concomitance of Organic and Psychological Changes during Marked Improvement in Schizophrenia.* (Amer. Journ. Psychiat., vol. xiii, p. 1349, May, 1934.) Erickson, M. H.

Detailed studies were made for a period of seven months on a patient suffering from schizophrenia, catatonic reaction type. Three distinct psychiatric states were found: stupor, recovery from the stupor, and a condition of apparent recovery from the psychosis. During the stuporous state he was under weight, had diminished oxygen consumption, reduced body temperature, polyuria and delayed colonic emptying time. During the second period he gained weight, manifested a slight increase in body temperature, a slight decrease in oxygen consumption rate, and mild secondary anæmia. During the third period he seemed to have reached the level of his pre-institutional mental state, had gained weight, and showed a normal body temperature and oxygen consumption rate. There was evidence of a pituitary deficiency manifested at about puberty. When more studies of this kind have been made, we may have an answer to the question of functional interdependence.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

*The Mental State in Katatonia [L'état mental au cours de l'accès catatonique].* (Ann. Méd. Psych., vol. xiv (i), p. 317, March, 1934.) Baruk, M.

Patients, in a remission following a katatonic phase, complain especially of having experienced a feeling of mental torpor. They state that their will-power was under control and that the power of spontaneous initiative was lost. Frequently imperative hallucinations or vague delusional ideas are brought forward to explain this feeling. Despite the total absence of directed thinking, there is little impairment of memory fixation. Diminished affectivity is usually experienced, though some

cases describe heightened emotionalism bordering on ecstasy. When the condition had evolved towards hebephrenia there was diminished consciousness with unawareness of the automatisms and stereotyped speech and actions. These psychological phenomena are an attempt by the patient to describe and account for the subjective results of the causal cerebral toxæmia, and support previous physiological and experimental work on the ætiology of this condition. STANLEY M. COLEMAN.

*Thought in Schizophrenia.* (*Arch. Neur. and Psychiat.*, vol. xxxi, p. 1063, May, 1934.) *Vigotsky, L. S.*

The author studied the development of thought in children up to the age of puberty and the deterioration of thought in schizophrenia.

He found that the most important development of thought in adolescence was the change from "complex" types of thinking to conceptual types of thinking. [By complex-thinking the author means a simple elementary generalization found in the thought processes of a child, primitive man or a psychotic patient. It may be thought of as group thinking.] He also found that the most important deterioration of thought occurring in schizophrenia was an impairment in the function of the formation of concepts.

This investigation consisted in offering the patients a situation which required the formation of artificial concepts which would not be met with anywhere but in the setting of a laboratory experiment. It was possible by this method to demonstrate the impairment of the formation of concepts, not only when the disturbance of thought was quite apparent, but also in the cases in which no formal disorder of thought could be demonstrated.

The most frequent association structures encountered were (1) collective thinking, in which various objects are grouped together as if they formed a collection composed of different objects united by certain relationships; (2) chain complex thinking; (3) associative complex thinking; (4) pseudo-complex chain-thinking.

There was great difficulty in the formation of new concepts, although those formed previously were used well and quite automatically.

Some writers have compared the thinking of schizophrenics with the thinking of primitive people, with thought in dreams and finally with intellectual processes in lower animals, especially with the process of thought in spiders, as shown by Volkelt. However, the author points out that the selective consciousness of the spider does not so much perceive isolated sensations as perceive total conditioned emotional situations. Between abstract thinking in the form of concepts and thought as it is exhibited by the spider there are a great many developmental steps.

The complex thought observed in schizophrenics is the nearest step to conceptual thought and immediately precedes it genetically. There are millions of years of development between the process of thought of a spider and concept formation.

Early in schizophrenia the meaning of words is changed, but it is difficult to show these changes without using special methods. In schizophrenia, the patient uses in his speech the system of fixed names which he learned in childhood. When the disintegration takes place he reverts to complexes in the place of concepts. Each one of us carries schizophrenia in a latent form, *i. e.* in the mechanisms of thought, which when uncovered become the central figure in the drama of schizophrenic thought. The meanings of words become pathologically altered in schizophrenia, though such alterations do not become apparent for a long time. The experiments showed that there is a better understanding between schizophrenics and normal persons than between one schizophrenic and another. Disturbance in the capacity to understand words used in a metaphorical sense is a frequent characteristic of schizophrenia. The patients cannot see in a situation concretely described meanings other or more abstract than those directly signified by the particular words used in describing it.

Study of the perceptions of a patient with schizophrenia shows that various