

*The Primitive Catatonic Psychosis of Idiocy.* (*Brit. Journ. Med. Psych.*, vol. xiv, p. 230, Oct., 1934.) *Earl, C. J. C.*

The author describes a primitive catatonic psychosis in idiots, the signs of which are grouped under three headings: (a) Signs of deterioration; (b) signs of catatonia, there being two groups, the cataleptic and the hyperkinetic; (c) signs of emotional dissociation, principally attacks of causeless weeping or laughter, impulsiveness, and anomalous responses to painful stimuli. The condition is a psychiatric syndrome and not a "disease" *sui generis*. It occurs in mongolism, epiloia, post-infective and "simple" idiocy, and in dementia infantilis. The onset is usually before puberty, and is related to intellectual rather than to sexual maturity. It is considered to be a form of schizophrenia, played out on the psychomotor level rather than the symbolic. The monotypies of idiocy are release phenomena, but the stereotypies of this psychosis are rather a disintegration of the emotional and psychomotor mechanism at all its levels. Recent work on the anatomical correlates of catatonia is discussed briefly, and the writer suggests that, at the present time, the most reasonable view is that catatonia is a preformed cerebral mechanism, liable to be set in operation by lesions in different parts of the brain. The dynamic psychology is indefinite. No purely symbolic formulation seems adequate. One may speculate that the true stereotypies of the psychotic idiot are analogues of the abnormal phantasy life of the schizophrenic of normal intelligence.

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