

LOVE AS A PROCESS OF MATURATION.

By Dr. H. VON HATTINGBERG,
Germany.

It is a matter of fact that love represents an indispensable function in the development of the personality. It is true for the peculiar relation arising out of human contact as well as for the critical processes which passion evokes in our psychic life. The importance of this function has increased concomitantly with our constantly growing consciousness. Analytical psychology has occupied itself at various times with the problem of the development of the personality through love—in a certain sense we might say that this is one of its basic ideas. It is therefore all the more remarkable that the literature offers nowhere a clear expression of this idea. In any event the decisive conclusions to be drawn from the assumption of this conception have never been formulated, much less accepted.

The work of organization carried on by the consciousness which must harmonize the frequently opposed or conflicting tendencies of the instinctive drives does not take place without friction in the more conscious individual. The greater the inborn contrasts, the more the development assumes the form of a crisis. Through this crisis the original manifoldness of the inborn tendencies is split in a polar duality which is the point of departure for every theory of neurosis. The groups of forces which confront each other here are in themselves nameless. Among the various designations of the polarity, that one is of special significance which corresponds to the natural contrast between the sexes, because masculinity and femininity represent at the same time poles of mental valuing.

The assumption of the sexual role during puberty is only a first step in the development of the sexes. The development toward full maturity, toward complete adulthood, one might say, takes place in man and woman only step by step. In order not to stagnate, this process needs intimate human contact with the sexual partner as a vital stimulation. In this connection love has in general the task of making good the harm done by hyper-consciousness.

Love also makes bearable the unavoidable growing-pains caused by consciousness when we live through the inner conflict between the nameless groups of forces aroused by the love passion. With more conscious individuals love comes at certain junctures in their development where tensions collect which they cannot master in any other way. This "developmental love"

represents one of the most important forms of the crises of growing consciousness in the individual of the Christian Occident. Goethe's great personality grew in this way step by step.

A deeper understanding of this process premises the insight that in these love crises we are concerned, frequently without the individual's knowledge, with mental problems which are fought out in the "vital dialectic" of love. The questions which move us so tumultuously can be grouped around two points of crystallization; the *problem of the orgasm* (in other words, the problem of the will, and of sexual morals), and the *problem of the sexes* (polarity of being—patriarchy-matriarchy; external achievements—inner, pure being.) The depth of these questions which is hidden by Freud's sexual theory brings a realization of the dark significance of sexuality. Such an altered conception of sexuality demands an analysis of sexuality which Freud has failed to give us.

Another, not less important result from this conception of love as a maturing process is the fact that the relationship of conscious individuals in marriage develops into an analytical situation. When we accept the inevitable, recurring critical situations provoked by the reciprocal inner disturbance of the marriage partners through the friction of their intimacy, the human relation in love, precisely through these inner upheavals, can lead to our finding ourselves. It is by reason of this development, this complicated, tortuous process, that the ethical demands for the indissoluble, monogamous marriage can be given a psychological background.