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EDITORIAL

MEDICAL EDUCATION

There was a time when any commodity was manufactured by single individual artisan with his own hands or with the help of some assistants under his direct supervision. Thus, the artisan was the master of the commodity in the real sense of the term, with complete mastery over the whole line of his trade from raw material to the finished product; and the finished product bore the impress of artistic hand in all its details. But to-day—in the age of industry and machine—art itself is becoming mechanised, human values are getting depreciated, no trace of human touch can be detected in any of the modern commodities. And none of the artisans of any industry, say cloth industry or watch industry, has anything to do with the whole commodity, he knows and is efficient in a very small part of the whole. The Engineer only knows how to assemble these small parts into a whole product to the best mercenary (and not artistic) advantage of the master of the commodity—the entrepreneur—who has nothing to do with the labour, technique or art involved in the production. Mechanised industry has not only completely captured the field of commodity production, but it is now invading the human brain itself in the form of robots, computers, etc.

We are mentioning all these things, not to deprecate the modern glorious developments in technology and industry. Rather, we thoroughly realise and appreciate the importance and significance of these developments when man is going to

master space and time. What we want to impress is that, the basic role and significance of human brain and hands should not be forgotten in this age of prodigious progress. We should not forget that even the mechanical brains—the robots and computers—have got to be evolved, improved and maintained by man and his art.

The danger of blind mechanization has proved to be especially havocing in the field of Medicine. The traditional Medicine has long ceased to be an art, it has almost completely been transformed into applied Physics, Chemistry and Biology. The progress of Biology itself is being hampered by mechanical approach. Life has ceased to exist both in Biology and traditional Medicine. The organism is taken as the summation of atoms, ions, molecules constituting some machine-parts, and disease as some sort of chemicophysical or mechanical disorder of these machine-parts, or invasion by some chemicophysical bodies. This attitude has become disastrous not only to the sick man, but to the Medical Student also. When a medical student comes out through his curriculum of study, his brain becomes jammed with myriads of these data and facts—too many of which have accumulated in about last one hundred years, and are daily fast accumulating—completely sapped of spirit and human sentiments, and even of understanding what to do with these vast mass of facts. Then, by dint of natural instinct of survival, manages to forget all facts so far stuffed into his brain and picks up a small part of it—e.g. heart, lungs, genitals, bones, skin, or nay hair, and so on, and become a specialist in that particular small part, totally oblivious of the whole man; or if he prefers to remain a general practitioner, he takes up the role of a middleman mechanically prescribing on the data supplied by the laboratory, according to the advice and suggestions of medicine manufacturers, the patient as a whole remaining almost outside the picture.

It is a very good thing that the acme of abstraction and mechanisation of Medicine seems to have already been passed, saner sense has already started to prevail upon some thinkers in the school of traditional Medicine. They have already started to realise, although tardily, that, in Biology the ordinary

psychological characteristics be regarded as compensations for the particular somatic weakness of the types? In Adler's conception the notion was inherent that the psychic is in some way opposite or opposed to the somatic, it is not a mere extension.

In his small but significant work, *Genitaltheorie*, Ferenczi sketched a methodology for permeating biological thinking with psychological concepts and vice versa, and it is a misfortune that these suggestions have not been followed up. Groddeck throughout used his own psychoanalytical approach in the understanding and treatment of patients, the majority with so-called organic disease. To him there was no essential difference between the two groups. Few have been able in this century so to rid themselves of preconceptions and he must be regarded as one of the main pioneers of psychosomatic medicine. For him, at best, functional and organic are different approaches to a problem, all disease is psychic and somatic. Hidden in all organic symptoms are the same archetypes and conflicts as in neurotic illness. However, the scientific prejudices still prevent most of us from grasping with Groddeck the reality of the Symbol, and the language of disease.

It was only when scientists in laboratories began to study and produce evidence of the emotional causation of somatic disease that the world of orthodoxy began to take notice. Wolff and Wolf's famous observations of the stomach mucosa through a fistula produced a tremendous impact. The observation that frustration and indignation could produce the dramatic appearances of "gastritis" and the development of peptic ulceration shook the doves, although the observation that blushing is produced by shame apparently was not so shaking. Similar studies on other symptoms have since taken place. It has even been observed that the blood pressure in malignant hypertension can be reduced to normal during a skilled psychotherapeutic interview, in which the aggressive conflicts are temporarily relieved. No one who has attempted to handle negative emotions in himself will be surprised that the effects are not permanent.

In the meantime, from another side, Selye started his now

famous work on "Stress", based on the observation that there is a large amount of symptomatology common to all illness—the "being unwell". From this beginning grew the now enormous work on stress and the cortico-steroids. Enormous work has gone on in every branch of "objective" research, particularly we may mention the work on the nervous system, the traditional seat of the soul.

However, as all this latter work is based on conceptions and techniques of a purely objective, materialistic kind (such as is appropriate in the inorganic realm), there is no possible bridge between them and the world of experience, the subjective. Furthermore, the concept of the soul has been made so entirely subjective and immaterial that it is difficult to conceive of its having material effect, even on the nervous system. One is reminded of Bergson's hint that we have made the body too purely mechanical, and the soul too purely mere awareness for interaction to be thinkable. It is as though we were dealing with a recrudescence of ancient heresies on a new level, the denial of full incarnation.

That we associate the brain and consciousness is dependent on the intuitive experience of looking through our eyes. We in our waking consciousness, so closely connected with seeing and thinking, feel ourselves behind our eyes. There is nothing, however, in our understanding of the Unconscious Psyche which leads us to locate it also in the Brain or nervous system. Nor can we lightly dismiss the intuitive experience of many poets, and of ordinary mankind, who sense the relation of our emotions not so much to the brain as to the heart.

Practical actions demand a narrowing of consciousness, an exclusion of irrelevant perceptions, and memories, and points of view. Bergson was compelled to see the function of Brain and Sense Organs as related to this excluding function, to forgetting, not to remembering, to paralysing unnecessary movement rather than to causing movement. Experimental embryology has demonstrated that amputated limbs, for instance in frogs, will regrow only if an increased nerve supply is grafted into the stump. It does not matter where the nerve comes from, or whether it is motor or sensory. It appears that a for-

mative influence comes from the nerves, an Apollonic force, without which the Dionysiac impulses cannot develop an ordered growth. The significance of such phenomena for problems of carcinogenesis has recently been stressed by Prof. Smithers. Perhaps from such phenomena we can begin a revaluation of the function of the nervous system, and escape from our present image of it as a mere telephone system or electronic feed-back circuit. Moreover, something organized the nervous system in its growth. Was thinking itself the power that formed the brain?

Until the reality of the soul is acknowledged no real solutions are possible. Thinking, feeling, and willing are real forces which produce real results. Steiner's suggestion that these should be correlated with the nervous, rhythmic and metabolic systems respectively would seem to deserve wider consideration than it has yet received.

In any case, the psychological and characterological determination of chronic disease has become very apparent even if it has not led to any very successful established techniques in therapy. Certainly the mere making conscious of forgotten experiences is not necessarily therapeutic, and may be dangerous. The inability to forget may be as serious a disease as the inability to remember and a new development in a personality or culture is always dependent on the loss of forgetting of some old faculty and knowledge. It is a misunderstanding of modern psychology to imagine that everything should or can be brought into consciousness, such a view being evidence only of the egotistical greed of the empirical ego striving to own everything. What we need is to restore fruitful relations between the conscious and unconscious, and a right balance. The scientific method and consciousness can and should liberate us from mystical dreams and superstitions, but it is an arrogant usurpation when this materialistic science thinks that everything belongs to it.

We have in the homœopathic materia medica excellent raw material for psychosomatic research in a profound direction.

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disease". These remarks might almost be taken from a book on Homœopathic philosophy and they suggest that the pendulum of medical fashion is beginning to swing back from the highly scientific analyses of every measurable bodily function to a more natural but also more philosophical consideration of the patient as a whole, which is in keeping with the ideas of homœopathic philosophy.

—*The British Homœo. Journal, Jan. 1959*

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However, when we try to integrate this with the physiology and pathology of today an inner discordance becomes apparent. There is no reason why we should not gradually construct an organic science of man which would be to our present physiology and pathology what our homœopathic materia medica should be to the orthodox materia medica.

—*Editorial, The British Homœo. Journal, Oct. '59.*