

frightened himself rather badly by gazing up at a pair of long and sharp mounted Highland cattle horns which used to hang over a certain doorway in the house in which he was born.

He had imagined at the time how terrible it would be to be tossed by an animal having such formidable structures as these, or for one of them to be run through his body. He was between 5 and 6 years old at the time of giving himself this fright, and had certainly not thought of the incident again since the age of 7, until it was remembered by the process of self-analysis, i.e., not at all during an interval of 26 years.

He was away from home with his brother at the time of the analytical recollection, and he related the original incident to this relative, remarking, "I wonder where those horns are now?" Whereupon his brother replied, "Do you mean those Highland cattle horns which hang over the dining-room doorway in our present house?" The writer responded, "Are they there now? They surely cannot be for I should have seen them," to which his brother replied that he thought they must be the same.

Upon returning home the writer was more than surprised to find the same large horns hanging up in the position indicated, although he had not seen or noticed them consciously for over twenty years. This is all the more remarkable as they were by far the largest and most conspicuous objects exposed to his gaze each morning on coming downstairs—the staircase being exactly opposite the doorway. These facts were very surprising to the writer, and the phenomenon is undoubtedly a striking instance of a mental blind spot. In spite of the fact that the horns were by far the most conspicuous objects present his mind was apparently able to ignore their existence entirely, and he saw completely through them, as it were, to the wall-paper beyond, owing to having frightened himself with them in his childhood.

If many other people possess such pronounced blind areas, as they probably do, they would, of course, never become aware of the fact unless or until the repressed emotion formerly associated with the objects had been removed by an analytic process, or by some other method.

The phenomenon interested the writer as indicating that evidence in Law Courts, for example, that certain objects were not present on a certain occasion, is not necessarily reliable. Probably evidence that certain objects were present under certain circumstances is, on the whole, far more reliable than evidence to the effect that they were not present.

The writer would much like to discover why he was so badly frightened by the horns in the first instance. The fear that he might be tossed by similar horns is not an adequate explanation, for it does not explain the underlying origin of this fear. He has found it, however, very difficult indeed to find out the actual underlying origin of such a fear as this. Still, it should be possible ultimately to discover its underlying origin by continued work at the method of free-association.

A detailed account of the method of self-analysis employed by the writer is about to be published elsewhere.⁽¹⁾ Several accounts of incidents from his early childhood recollected by it have already been published.^(2,3) It will be noted that the results obtained by this method of self-analysis are not open to the general criticism that the analyst reads the results into the mind of his external patient. Processes of self-analysis, and the results obtained by them, should thus be particularly interesting to cautious and careful persons, even if they may not be so striking as some of the results obtained with analysts.

SCOTTISH ASYLUMS' PATHOLOGICAL SCHEME.

Twenty-eighth Annual Report of the Board For the Year 1924.

[ABSTRACT.]

In this Report it is stated that arrangements were completed during the year with Edinburgh University authorities approving of the new Superintendent of the Laboratory being recognized as Lecturer in Neuropathology. From the

⁽¹⁾ See a forthcoming issue of *The British Journal of Medical Psychology*.—⁽²⁾ See the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, January, 1925.—⁽³⁾ *The Medical Press*, April 29, 1925.

number of candidates who applied for the vacant post of Superintendent of the Laboratory, the Board report that F. E. Reynolds, M.B., Ch.B., Senior Assistant to the Professor of Pathology at Edinburgh University, and formerly Professor of Pathology at the Egyptian Government School of Medicine, Cairo, was unanimously appointed to fill the vacancy, and that Dr. Reynolds's appointment as Lecturer in Neuropathology at the University received the approval of the University Court.

The Board expresses the hope that a closer association may be established between contributing asylums and the Central Laboratory. One of Dr. Reynolds's important duties is to visit periodically the contributing mental hospitals in order that he may advise medical officers as to recent laboratory methods, and at the same time suggest useful lines for research.

For several years past a grant from Treasury funds has been paid by the Medical Research Council to the laboratory for scientific research work. Intimation, however, had been received last year from the Secretary of the Research Council to the effect that an alteration in the method of paying grants had been instituted, and that in future these would only be awarded for special research work receiving the approval of the Committee of the Research Council. Dr. Reynolds has been awarded a grant amounting to £200 for the current year in respect of his researches into the "Paths of Infection of the Lepto-Meninges."

Until more suitable and convenient premises are found for the Laboratory, Dr. Reynolds occupies a room in the Pathological Department of the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, which he has had equipped as an extension to the Laboratory in Frederick Street.

At the Annual Meeting of the Board, Dr. G. Douglas McRae was unanimously appointed Chairman of the Board in succession to Dr. Skeen, whose term of office had expired, and the Executive Committee was appointed, consisting of Dr. McRae, Chairman; Dr. R. B. Campbell, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer; Drs. Orr, Kerr, Keay, Bruce, Skeen, and Ex-Provost Stark.

JOINT BOARD OF RESEARCH FOR MENTAL DISEASES, BIRMINGHAM.

Annual Report for Year ending March, 1925.

[ABSTRACT.]

THE work of the laboratory during the past year has been to develop lines of research upon the basis of endocrine functions; special attention has so far been given to the thyroid gland, and below are given details of the basal metabolism determinations and the analyses of thyroid gland for iodine content. There has been an inquiry into the action of certain hypnotic drugs upon animals with respect to the physiological action and the effect upon the general health and well-being of the animals.

A large amount of routine serological, bacteriological and chemical work has been done for the clinical staff of the Rubery and Hollymoor Hospitals, chiefly from their gynaecological, ear, nose and throat and dental departments.

In view of the probable association between chronic sepsis and disturbed endocrine function the bacteriological work has become part of the research, and has occupied the larger proportion of the work of the laboratory.

BASAL METABOLISM.

The determination of the basal metabolism in the special respiration chamber has been improved upon both as regards procedure and in respect to refinements of the gas analysis apparatus. The elaboration and perfecting of this apparatus has occupied much time in the laboratory, and much credit is due to Prof. Haldane, F.R.S., and Dr. Graham for valuable assistance and advice.

There have been 60 determinations made of 22 patients and 11 nurses; and of these 4 patients and 1 nurse showed metabolism exceeding 110 per cent. of the standard, the highest being 125 per cent., and 8 patients and 4 nurses showed metabolism below 90 per cent. of the standard—the lowest, a patient, being just under 50 per cent. of the standard; the remainder were within 90–110 per cent. of the figures given in the Harris and Benedict tables for standard metabolism.