

MEDICINE

Psychiatry for Epileptics

With treatment for emotional problems epileptic children have fewer fits and need less medicine. Release of emotional tension aids improvement.

► EPILEPTIC children have fewer fits and need less medicine when they get psychiatric treatment for their emotional problems. And they can be helped so that they will not be behavior problems or peculiar.

A treatment program achieving these results at the Baird Foundation Clinic, New York, was reported by Dr. Leopold Deutsch and Louise L. Wiener at the meeting in Cincinnati of the American Orthopsychiatric Association.

Almost half, 24 of 57 children, improved and continued to show improvement when retested after a year. Fifteen are still under treatment. Eighteen remained unimproved.

Very few of the children were mentally defective or had any organic defect of the brain structure. Most of them had the same neurotic behavior and personality disorders seen in any child guidance clinic. Some were aggressive, but as a whole the group was less destructive than most child guidance clinic patients. Play materials in the treatment room almost never had to be replaced, although with other groups of children suffering behavior disorders it was necessary to

refurnish the treatment room two or three times in a similar length of time.

In some cases the epilepsy made worse the difficulties these children had in growing up, the same kind of difficulties many children without epilepsy have. In other cases, the teasing, humiliation and fear that they suffered because they were subject to fits cause the nervous or mental illness. In some cases the children were babied by parents who themselves were afraid the children were in greater danger of being run over or otherwise getting hurt because they had epilepsy.

Epileptic children seem to be afraid to show aggressiveness the way non-epileptic children do by grabbing, fighting and throwing things. They are afraid of retaliation. At the clinic they found they could be aggressive without being punished. With tension thus released, they had fewer fits, or seizures, and needed less medicine.

The outlook for epileptic children always will be better, the New York scientists believe from their experiences, when the children are given a chance for proper release of emotional tension.

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PALEONTOLOGY

Hunt for Man-Ape to Begin

► A SCIENTIFIC task force, equipped to pick the lock of what may be a most dazzling evolutionary treasure chest, is now making detailed plans to embark this summer from the University of California for South Africa.

Fragments of a man-ape, as provoking as a couple of sample doubloons to a Captain Kidd, lead the Berkeley scientists to believe that in the hard limestone caves near Johannesburg they may find an ancestor to man who could be three million years old.

Two skulls, an ankle bone, a femur and a finger bone, recovered by Dr. Robert Broom, of the Transvaal Museum, from blasting during mining operations at one of the cave deposits, are the most enticing specimens to be investigated.

The Berkeley expedition, one of the best equipped of its kind ever to be or-

ganized, will be prepared to drill into the hard limestone deposits to extricate whole specimens of the man-ape, if they exist.

They will also attempt to find evidences of fire, artifacts, fossilized seeds and leaves of plants, and skeletons of other animals. With such information it may be possible to assign the man-ape a place in the scale of man's evolution, if indeed he is an ancestor to man.

Dr. Charles L. Camp, eminent paleontologist and director of the University's Museum of Paleontology, is supervising all scientific phases of the expedition. He is a veteran of South African scientific exploration. Ten years ago he brought out of the Dark Continent what is probably the best collection of fossil reptiles ever excavated there.

Dr. Camp, who says that he has al-

ready made arrangements to work with Dr. Broom, believes a successful assignment of the man-ape's age and succession may give scientists a new starting point in man's evolution. If the specimens are pre-man types, he says, it may be possible to trace back another step toward the ape or ape-like type from which man originated.

Success in the exploration could take scientists back to the Pliocene epoch of geological time, about three million years ago, before the glacial epoch, Dr. Camp states.

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