

## PSYCHIATRY

# Psychopaths Are Treatable

**Psychodramas, in which plays were formed entirely out of fantasy of patients, found way in which the virtually untreatable psychopaths can be helped.**

► A WAY has been found to treat the "virtually untreatable" psychopath.

Often involved in sex and other crimes the psychopath has been "society's and psychiatry's greatest headache," in the words of Dr. Walter Bromberg, Sacramento, Calif., psychiatrist who for many years has been identified with criminologic psychiatry and who, until recently, was director of the Mendocino, Calif., State Hospital.

"Psychiatry has found that the sardonic, snarling mask of the psychopath hides the frightened, lonesome face of a neurotic character," Dr. Bromberg declared at the meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in Los Angeles.

The difficulty in treating the psychopath, he said, can be solved by two moves: 1. A firm authoritarian handling of the unwilling patient, usually in institutions; 2. Group therapy. In the group treatment, Dr. Bromberg explained, an atmosphere of play allows the doctor and, through him, society to be seen "as if" they were not intolerant

and vengeance-seeking toward the psychopath.

"Thus," Dr. Bromberg said, "the psychopath's defensive character-front is thawed."

"Experiences with adult sexual deviates paralleled experiences with a group of psychopathic boys under this treatment. At first both groups were anxious lest they be considered insane, then became relaxed, releasing tension in aggressive behavior, then showed deep dependence on the therapist (doctor) and staff and finally acted out their inner problems.

"The technique used was that of psychodrama in which the plays were formed entirely out of the fantasy of the patients and interpreted by the therapist and staff.

"In this work the defensiveness of the patients and the defensive anger of society toward the patients must both be studied. This is a complex and difficult field," Dr. Bromberg pointed out, "but well worth the effort involved."

Science News Letter, May 16, 1953

## PUBLIC HEALTH

# Rules for Sneakers

► "CAN I go barefoot?" "Can I wear my sneakers today instead of shoes?" These are questions many parents will be hearing with the start of summer if not before.

Answers to them were given in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (April 18) by Dr. Louis Starr of Brooklyn, N. Y. Dr. Starr is associated with the department of orthopedic surgery of New York University College of Medicine.

"In the house," he said, "barefoot walking should be at a minimum. A child may be allowed to walk barefoot in the sand or on the grass. This is excellent exercise for foot and toe muscles."

His answer to the sneaker question was: "Sneakers are very flexible and are ideal for athletic activities such as in the gymnasium and on the tennis court. They are not intended for use all through the day, and they are not intended to replace shoes. They may be worn for limited periods of time when a child is indulging in some athletic pursuit."

Answers to some other questions parents often ask were:

An infant should start to wear shoes as soon as he maneuvers about to any considerable extent outside the playpen. However, if an infant has weak feet, he should wear adequate shoes as soon as he is able

to draw himself up into a standing position.

High shoes are preferable for infants as they are easier to keep on, he added. Older children should be fitted with low shoes, as they are cooler and dryer and afford adequate protection.

Slippers are a convenient hygienic measure provided they are limited to use for which they are intended. They should not be used just because the child is in the house. They should not be used when the child is allowed up and about the house during convalescence from an illness.

Science News Letter, May 16, 1953

## ORNITHOLOGY

## San Benedicto Wren Joins Extinct Dodo Bird

► THE SAN Benedicto Island wren has joined the Dodo bird and the American passenger pigeon as birds of extinction, and its demise was much more sudden and spectacular than that of the other two fowls.

Bayard Brattstrom, University of California at Los Angeles zoologist, states that after probably more than 100,000 years of unique existence on the lonely isle off the

coast of Mexico, this entire sub-species of wren was wiped out in the mighty upheaval of the birth of the island's new volcano.

There is a slight possibility that a pair of the birds may have escaped to carry the line elsewhere. But the nearest land is an island 32 miles away, so the zoologist holds little hope that the tiny birds made their way there.

The thick layer of volcanic ash covering the island has made it uninhabitable for animals or plants for some time to come, Mr. Brattstrom says. His observations were made in connection with a Scripps Institution of Oceanography study of this region.

Science News Letter, May 16, 1953

## SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 63

MAY 16, 1953

No. 20

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N. St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., NORTH 7-2255. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscription rates: 1 yr., \$5.50; 2 yrs., \$10.00; 3 yrs., \$14.50; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage.

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Printed in U. S. A. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for by Sec. 34.40, P. L. and R., 1948 Edition, paragraph (d) (act of February 28, 1925; 39 U. S. Code 283), authorized February 28, 1950. Established in mimeographed form March 18, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Abridged Guide, and the Engineering Index.

Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Advertising Representatives: Howland and Howland, Inc., 393 7th Ave., N.Y.C., Pennsylvania 6-5566, and 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Superior 7-6048.

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