

PSYCHIATRY

Beauty Parlor for Patients

THE FIRST completely new mental hospital to be built in the British Isles since before World War II is now being finished on a 420-acre site overlooking Lough Foyle, Londonderry, Northern Ireland. Sections of it are already in operation and Dr. D. J. C. Dawson, the medical superintendent, is introducing many revolutionary ideas to help the patients back to health.

"We are trying to break away from the old hospital atmosphere," Dr. Dawson said. "Patients are not given hospital beds in wards but the kind they might have at home in separate houses."

A beauty parlor for women patients, a barber's shop for the men, weekly dances and unlocked doors are other features. The women get their beauty treatments and hair sets free.

"We regard the beauty service as a part of the treatment," Dr. Dawson explained. "It is first-class for the women patients' morale."

The hospital has a large number of workshops covering various trades and there is also a substantial range of occupational therapy activities. It also has a recreation

hall, gymnasium, store, canteen and library.

Recreations include an internal program of patients' choices of phonograph disks, quizzes, film shows and concerts.

In the large grounds is a farm which helps to provide a substantial part of the patients' food. The grounds are also dotted with villas, built to take 30 or 60 patients. All the houses are linked to a steam heating plant, thus avoiding any risks of fire from open coal, gas or electric heaters.

The hospital will cost about \$6,000,000 when it is finished in a few weeks' time.

The Northern Ireland Government is also spending another \$6,000,000 on a second hospital for mentally retarded patients who need special care. This hospital, at Muckamore Abbey, Co. Antrim, will also operate on the open door principle, but it is recognized that some difficult cases will present special problems and that some form of restraint will have to be introduced to control them. In this hospital treatment will be given through training in schools and workshops.

Science News Letter, June 11, 1960

PSYCHOLOGY

Subliminal Techniques

UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, subliminal techniques may strengthen the way observers interpret what they see, Drs. Michael Goldstein and Richard Barthol of the University of California, Los Angeles, have found.

They experimented with incidental, or subliminal, stimuli among groups of college students.

One group was shown slides of human figures engaged in some sort of activity. Positive words such as success, laugh, happy, love were briefly superimposed on some of the slides.

In another group, negative words such as failure, cry, angry and hate were superimposed on the same group of slides.

The same experiments were repeated in other groups with slides out of focus so that they were fuzzy, but human figures were still identifiable.

Students in all groups were asked to tell a story about each slide. The stories were tape recorded.

Analysis of the stories indicated that in groups viewing slides in focus there was no apparent subliminal influence on stories about the slides. Among those viewing "fuzzy" slides there was an influence, with the positive group telling positively toned stories and vice versa. Subjects did not recall seeing the briefly superimposed words.

The UCLA psychologists interpreted these results to mean that when people are viewing pictures with strong visual cues, subliminal "messages" do not get through. But if the cues are not strong, incidental stimuli, even though brief, may influence the tone of the general perception of the pictures' meaning.

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SURGERY

Surgeons Rebuild Hands

DRAMATIC demonstrations and reports at the annual meeting of the American Association of Plastic Surgeons showed how operations can transfer bones, tendons and skin from one part of the body to another to rebuild a usable hand.

Ten patients of Drs. William H. Frackelton and Jack L. Teasley, Milwaukee plastic surgeons, came to the meeting to show what had been done for them. Most of

them had been injured in industrial accidents in which fingers were crushed, skin torn away, nerves and tendons severed.

Eight had a series of operations that enabled them to use their hands. Seven could return to their former jobs. Only two had to have amputations and had to be fitted with artificial hands.

"A single finger with sensation and movement," the doctors said, "performs better

than any artificial hand thus far conceived."

One patient had lost four fingers from his right hand, retaining only the index finger. An operation that transferred tendon and skin and deepened the cleft between his forefinger and the stump of his thumb enabled him to write and pick up objects.

Reporting on seven operations on small children born without thumbs or with a rudimentary thumb, Dr. David N. Matthews of the Hospital for Sick Children in London said that in each case he turned the child's index finger into a useful thumb by shortening it and shaping the discarded bone into a peg. He fitted one end of the peg into the hand and the other into the forefinger.

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