

Insane Not Likely to Have Families

Sociology

Encouraging Figures Shown Sociologists

THE encouraging report that men and women suffering from serious mental maladies are not so likely to raise families as are normal persons, was made to a joint meeting in Washington of the American Statistical Association and the American Sociological Society by Dr. Neil A. Dayton, director of research of the Massachusetts State Department of Mental Diseases.

Dr. Dayton has made the first comprehensive survey of the marriages, divorces, and size of families produced by patients suffering from psychoses, that is, such diseases as dementia praecox, manic depressive psychosis, general paralysis of the insane, and alcoholic psychosis. Twelve thousand families of patients discharged from Massachusetts state hospitals during the past twelve years were studied.

Something in the biological make-up of the individual with mental disease interferes with his marrying, Dr. Dayton explained. Among those who do establish homes, the same mental twists interfere with the maintenance of a permanent household. The divorce rate is five times as high among the individuals studied as it is among the normal population. Those psychotic individuals who do reproduce tend to have smaller families than are found in the normal population. Sterility is three per cent. higher among the psychotic patients who marry than among normal individuals.

The figures on two generations obtained by Dr. Dayton indicate in general that mental disease does not tend to stimulate a desire to marry and rear children, but on the contrary it blocks those desires.

The frequently heard statements that birth injuries and advanced age of parents are responsible for much mental disease were refuted by Dr. Dayton, who said that neither of these conditions figures to any extent as a cause of psychoses.

CROWDING of people into cities is tending to produce more and more of what the psychiatrists call introverts, Dr. James S. Plant, director of the Essex County Juvenile Clinic, Newark, N. J., said at another session. Dr. Plant based his remarks on experience with the children brought to the clinic of which he is director.

These introverts are shut-in personalities, as contrasted with the extroverts who are more socially inclined. The introverts find expression for their mental hungers, desires or appetites in symbols, while the extroverts find such expression in physical activities, Dr. Plant explained. Because of the crowded conditions of our modern cities, children and adults alike are driven to symbols for the expression of their desires. Such symbols are to be found in the movies, sports exhibitions like organized baseball and football, and various play spectacles. These provide city dwellers with a vicarious means of expression of their emotions.

While these same symbols exist in the country, rural inhabitants still have more opportunities for physical expression than their city cousins. Dr. Plant said that there was a distinct change in the type of play of the children in his county corresponding with the urbanization of certain areas of it. For example, he said that of some 1,500 children examined, only two were found who were interested in digging caves.

The fall of every great civilization has been preceded by a great interest in the symbols of activity rather than the activity itself, such symbols being found in art, literature, music, and the like, Dr. Plant pointed out. He thought the development of a civilization would show two curves, one of introversion and one of extroversion. The extrovert curve would be greatest early in the civilization but the introvert curve would be greatest later in the civilization and its growth would be followed by the decay of the civilization.

TRAFFIC cops are hard-boiled and patrolmen sometimes dumb because they have not advanced intellectually as rapidly as the masses, Prof. A. G. Barry, of the University of Wisconsin, said in his address.

Growth of cities, wide dissemination of knowledge, changes in public opinion and the ascendancy of social sciences were cited as changes affecting police problems with which policemen have not kept abreast.

Not the police technician or the administrator, but the patrolman, who makes first contact with almost every problem and sole contact with many minor law violators, is the one

whose training is deficient.

The patrolman deals with people and social conditions, whereas most police training schools teach only technique, efficiency, identification, capture and correction, he said. The other type of school, however, which takes into account social problems and makes the personal contacts of the patrolmen promote respect and obedience of law, is increasing.

"The widespread belief in the possibility of an experiment of human behavior has led to the abandonment of respect for law as God-given, for a belief that laws are 'tools' or 'social experiments' created and subject to change by the people who must obey them," declared Prof. Barry.

"Tradition changes slowly when the light of education fails to shine," he continued, "and policemen have been wholly unprepared to accept the responsibility of different treatment for two violators of the same law."

COLLEGIATE scandals and social disorders among students are often the result of a clash between two of the three dominant culture streams in America, Dr. Martin Hayes Bickham, of Chicago, a member of the Committee on Social Analysis of College Communities, told the meeting.

The three streams are the Puritan, originating in New England, the Tidewater, beginning in the South; and the Continental, of more recent origin in urban centers.

Both the Puritan and the Tidewater cultures are characterized by a deep-rooted love of learning and religion. The former spread across the northern part of the United States and the latter across the southern, their influences extending to the Pacific coast.

These two early culture streams were largely rural and Protestant, while the Continental culture, which began to be felt about 1830, was urban and heavily Catholic.

"The evidence seemed to show that students from the Puritan culture influence could mingle fairly easily with students from the Tidewater culture influence," Dr. Bickham said. "The sharper cultural clashes were evident in colleges where youths from immigrant and Catholic backgrounds ventured to go to colleges in which the older culture streams were dominant."

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