



WHERE EARLY CHRISTIANS PASSED

ARCHAEOLOGY

Oldest Christian Chapel Moved Overseas To Yale

THE EARLIEST Christian chapel ever discovered has been moved overseas from Syria and reconstructed in the Yale Gallery of Fine Arts.

The chapel is of extraordinary historic interest, since it dates from the early part of the third century, when Christians worshipped secretly in Rome's catacombs and in such tiny, concealed rooms as this Syrian chapel. On the walls are paintings, showing how early Christians pictured such scenes as Christ healing the lame man at Capernaum, Peter attempting to walk on the water, and the three Marys at the tomb of Christ. A box-like affair is identified as an early baptismal font.

Yale archaeologists who unearthed the chapel in ruins of Dura-on-the-Euphrates, trace its history through several generations of use, ending with Dura's fall in the Persian siege of 256 A. D.

The chapel, they explain, was first merely a secluded room in the home of wealthy Christians, who must have offered it as a safe place for worship in time of Christian persecution.

A generation or two later, when the

Christian sect had grown stronger and was more tolerated, the family moved out, leaving the large and elegant house to the Christian community. The archaeologists infer this from finding no trace of stove, cistern, or other household gear. At this time, the rooms were rearranged and walls of the tiny chapel were decorated with their many Biblical paintings.

Other rooms in the house were in-

congruously left adorned with pagan Bacchic friezes. This suggests to the archaeologists that taste had changed, or else that final siege of the city in 256 interrupted the renovation.

The chapel has been reconstructed under supervision of Herbert Gute, graduate of the Yale School of Fine Arts. Mr. Gute spent two years working in Dura before he undertook the project.

Science News Letter, June 26, 1937

PSYCHIATRY

Bad Temper, Greed, Ambition, Lead to Mental Breakdown

BAD TEMPER, greed and overweening ambition are blamed for the bringing on of mental disease, by Henry Collins Brown, historian-founder of the Museum of the City of New York, himself a patient for about three years in a state hospital for mental patients and now recovered.

Mr. Brown's own breakdown occurred when, at the age of 65, he was removed from the Museum in which were tied up all his hopes and dreams and he was replaced by a younger man. He did not "lose his mind," did not become confused in his thoughts, but he entered a long period of depression during which he ceaselessly paced the floor without rest or even a sense of fatigue. During that period he made many illuminating observations of those about him.

"Early in my sojourn I became profoundly impressed with the large number of cases that were what I classed as preventable," Mr. Brown said in summing up these impressions in "A Mind Mislaid," published by Dutton. "That is to say, they were the result of causes that could be avoided. They were the direct and natural consequences of the risks deliberately chosen by the patients themselves. And, of course, when things went wrong, as they invariably did, one or two persons smashed up as a consequence.

"Philandering and excessive drinking furnished the largest contingent of these casualties," Mr. Brown declared.

"Love nests rear nothing but 'cuckoos.' That is a piece of 'bughouse' philosophy worth remembering."

Particularly, Mr. Brown warns against the dangers, mental as well as physical, of intense anger, which he hints had to do with his own troubles. Any feeling

so powerful as to take blood from one part of the body and send it scurrying to another puts upon the heart a violent strain, he points out. Persons who let themselves go whenever the impulse moves them are doing themselves a serious injury.

"We have all known men who allow themselves to get in a towering rage over some very trivial matter," said Mr. Brown. "Perhaps if that man knew that he might snap one of the numerous delicate tissues of the brain, causing him to spend his old age in an insane asylum, he might very readily learn to control himself.

"In the case of mature persons, it sometimes happens that an older man feels that he has earned the right to be as crotchety as he pleases. Particularly is this true of the man who has accomplished something and has reached a position of independence. He may have reached the latter state in a financial sense, but at no time has he reached the other. The fact that he can afford to indulge himself is a mistaken idea. Not if he wishes to keep on living and enjoying life for a few more years. . . . Why leave all that you have fought for, struggled for, and now have in abundance? Stay here while you can. Avoid passionate outbursts as you would a plague.

"Now self-control is not an easy matter. Today I can control myself, but who wants to go through what I did to learn a lesson that can be acquired without all that hideous torment and suffering?"

"I often think a few weeks spent in an insane asylum would be the greatest panacea for bad temper that could be devised."

Science News Letter, June 26, 1937