

disgust or repulsion at the waste products of the body, their appearance and smell; but the child, like the savage and we may add, the lunatic, shows none, being ready to play with them, smear itself and other things with them, give them to loved ones, even to eat and drink them, as well as finding as much pleasure in their smell, as cultured persons do in the finest perfumes. This we might find difficult to believe if we had not seen such frequent evidence of it. In the process of education the child's interest is diverted from these crude playthings. It learns to model in plasticene, it covers things with smears of brightly-coloured chalk, gives away little stones or scraps of waste material it has been hoarding. We say that the impulse has become *Sublimated*, but the old crude desire slumbers on in the Unconscious, seeking an outlet when occasion allows. This may be seen in the coprophilic orgies of the madman, or the patient whom severe illness has rendered incontinent, and is often found smothered from head to foot in fæces, especially the hands and nails from restless and only half-conscious playing with the bodily products. The interest and curiosity first displayed by the child in its excrements reappears in patients who perpetually talk and hanker after aperients and take so much interest in their constipation.

The weaning process is reanimated in a reversed form in the dieting of patients or in feeding them up.

Now permit me to introduce you to another psychological mechanism, which will help to explain the formation of character and the choice of a profession. This is *Reaction-formation*, which means the reversal of an impulse or tendency, changing it into its opposite, often grossly exaggerated, due to the action of Repression. This we explained before as the disappearance from the surface of an instinct or wish, because of pressure exerted from without, which causes them to take refuge in one of three things, sublimation, reaction-formation, or neurosis. We will return to this problem later on.

There are other impulses to be seen in children besides those we have just described. *Curiosity* is one of these, and has two aspects, *looking at another* and *wishing others to look at it*. Let us recollect the Doctor was so enviable because he knew all those hidden mysteries about which the child was so curious and concerning which it could gain no real gratification. By becoming a nurse we, too, hope to be initiated into these stupendous secrets of life and death. Another pair of impulses, no less important because mentioned last, are the two aspects of *cruelty*, *causing pain to others* and *bearing pain ourselves*, or its equivalents, discomfort or hardship. Unless we are interested in suffering in some way it is impossible to become a satisfactory nurse or doctor. Once more let us remember the mechanism of Reaction-formation and seek its application as applied to this pair of impulses, together with sublimation, and what consequences may be expected from unsuccessful repression. Where sublimation occurs we find the wish deriving satisfaction in an altered and socialised form, but still near enough the original to produce gratification. This is one of the few ways in which repression may be successfully dealt with. Unsuccessful repression often leads to great unhappiness, general discontent, the crippling of our faculties and the development of more or less decided neurotic character traits if not actual neurosis. On the other hand it may lead to reaction-formation, which will be satisfactory, or the reverse, according to the form taken and the amount of exaggeration present. Thus, this impulse of cruelty, repressed in early childhood may come to the surface later on as surgical talent in doctor or nurse, which is Sublimation. It may be successfully dealt with as Reaction-formation, causing the person to become tender-hearted and anxious to relieve suffering instead of causing it; in short, the good, sympathetic nurse; or it may be unsuccessfully repressed in either form and haunt its owner in the guise of an incessant desire to tease or be teased, to bully or be bullied, by taking

up the martyr rôle and feeling thoroughly miserable for no adequate cause, and the belief that nobody likes her and that she cannot do anything right.

Having this outline before us, we may see that the nursing profession may perfectly supply gratification of these childish wishes and bring contentment. But all nurses do not find satisfaction or happiness in their duties, nor in their choice of a career. Another element which is also an heritage of early training may prevent this. We are taught in those far-away days that the things we want to do are very naughty, and that if we do them no one will love us, and that no grown-up person would think of doing them. We assimilated these views and should we continue to indulge these old wishes, or resume them after a lapse of time, we may feel very guilty, especially if the repression should have been very severe or if drastic measures were taken to produce it too rapidly in the first place. For this reason we may not be able to attain the sublimation which will mean for us a satisfying profession. The Guilt will dog our steps throughout life, making success impossible, wrecking our brightest hopes, our most earnest endeavours. The most baffling factor connected with it is moreover that we may not be aware of the real cause of our difficulties, we will attribute it to fate, our evil genius, bad luck, anything else we please, for this, too, has slipped into the Unconscious together with the wishes to which it belongs, and all that remains upon the surface are the consequences of which unfortunately we cannot help being aware.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIET.

Lecturing recently at Hamilton House, Mabelton Place, in connection with the People's League of Health, Sir William Arbuthnot Lane stated that a correct diet was infinitely less costly than those generally adopted. The craving for variety and for tasty dishes led people to purchase expensive foods, most of which have been treated by heat or chemicals, or both, and deprived of their most important constituents. He strongly advised that the community should resort as much as possible to the simple foods which the earth provides in abundance, sufficient to keep their bodies in perfect health, and said that as civilisation progressed we got further and further from our normal diet and habits, and employed foods which the chemist and others had rendered useless, and too often poisonous, to the nutrition of our tissues.

THE RESIGNATION OF PROFESSOR M. A. NUTTING.

The resignation of Professor M. Adelaide Nutting, R.N., of the position of Director of the Department of Nursing and Health, at Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, which she has held with such distinction for the greater part of the present century, will be received with mingled feelings by her many friends. They realise that she needs the greater leisure which we hope she will now enjoy, and yet it needs a great woman to fill the great position which she has created, and made so peculiarly her own.

Knowledge, wisdom, charm, idealism, competence, loyalty to principles and to her profession, all these are indissolubly a part of the personality of our friend. We turn to her for them with the certainty that she will not be found wanting.

Let us hope that now Miss Nutting will be free of the urgent claims of office, her friends on this side of the Ocean will see more of her. That were happiness indeed. Her resignation takes effect at the end of the present school year, and she will be succeeded by Professor Isabel M. Stewart, R.N., who has been her co-adjutor and friend for so long.

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