

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FUNCTIONAL NEUROSES

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The psychology of functional neuroses by H. L. Hollingworth

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BY

H. L. HOLLINGWORTH

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY IN COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY; AUTHOR OF "ADVERTISING AND SELL-
ING," AND "VOCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY"; CO-
AUTHOR OF "APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY."



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TO
MY COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND
PROFESSOR WILLIAM PEPPERRELL MONTAGUE

But this one thing may be said, that psychology cannot portray the beautiful. Its work is not to admire but to explain; not to exhibit curiosities but to make man as he is generally comprehensible; neither to raise him to heaven, nor to fix him immovably in the dust; not to close the lines of investigation, but to open them.—HERBART, 1816.

PREFACE

It is psychologically as well as socially and medically desirable that representative cases of the functional neuroses be accorded the more thorough individual and group attention already given to the various other neuropsychiatric conditions. From this point of view it is fortunate that during the recent war a special hospital was designated where soldiers with persistent psychoneurotic symptoms were assembled for further observation and diagnosis, care and treatment. U. S. A. General Hospital No. 30, at Plattsburg Barracks, N. Y., was so designated. Along with the other hospital services, a psychological service was established, of which the writer was the director.

Along with the routine duties of the service, which was also charged with the conduct of occupational therapy, a group of about 1,200 consecutive cases was given special attention. Through the courtesy of the medical staff and the cordial coöperation of the various hospital services, complete data and records concerning all cases were accessible. Personal observations of

all cases and extended examination and observation of cases of special interest were facilitated. Psychological examinations were made of each individual, of such range and technique as the case and the interest and time of the psychological staff seemed to warrant. The briefest examination undertaken was such an investigation of intellectual capacity and mental alertness as would enable a record to be made of the individual's mental age. The examinations ranged from this minimum to cases studied for a total of ten hours or more, by nearly every available form of qualitative and quantitative psychological technique.

The value of such an opportunity is apparent. Here was an array of over a thousand psychoneurotics, whose symptoms were at least of such definite character that the individuals were found unadaptable to the conditions of service in a group enterprise. They were, however, not so extreme as to have kept these patients from being included in the military draft or accepted by the recruiting service. Although something like two-thirds of the cases appeared to represent conditions existing prior to enlistment, it would have been entirely impossible, under the ordinary conditions of civil life, to have submitted them to scientific examination. The symptoms presented probably in-