YOU AND PSYCHIATRY

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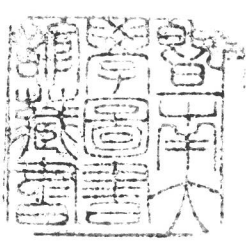

INTRODUCTION

This book is, in a way, a war baby. The authors met for the first time in the Army. One was working in the area of public relations and the other in the professional field of psychiatry. They found their jobs overlapped. The public wanted to know about psychiatry and psychiatry needed public understanding. The terrific loss of manpower in the Army and the Navy from psychiatric casualties started them to thinking that there must be some additional approach to helping the people of our nation understand the basic factors of mental health (certainly there have been lots of them).

It was their intention to try to put into simple words and pictures for men in the service some of the daily experiences that were common to many men, which made the going "rugged." Many believed they were alone in feeling the way they did—about discipline, regimentation, privacy, fear, etc. Most of their attitudes were the result of basic personality factors that existed long before their military service. A realization that they were all in the same boat was reassuring. Duty separated the authors before they had a chance to work it out and when they met again it was as civilians.

Today both feel that there is a much wider need for a better understanding of ourselves which could come from some of the knowledge based on technical findings of psychiatry as learned in the last fifty years. They felt it was worth their trying to put into simple words and abbreviated form some of this information which applies to

all of us in our daily lives, that are complicated at any time and more so in this period today that we call "Peace."

There are very few adults who have graduated from the public school system of our country who aren't familiar with at least some information on physical hygiene: the necessity of keeping clean, brushing their teeth, getting the right food, fresh air, exercise and rest. They learned it in terms that they could understand. At the same time there are many persons who have no clear understanding of either mental hygiene or their own personalities.

It would take a pretty hard-boiled citizen to say that there isn't any need for this understanding after taking a quick look around him today. Broken homes, juvenile delinquencies, crime waves, group hatreds, riots, political wranglings, suspicion and fear on all sides are not likely to make a thoughtful man or woman very smug about the state of our individual or collective mental health. What goes for the United States, you can double or triple, for too much of the rest of the world.

This book is written in the hope that it will make clear to many the fundamentals of the vital part of living that aren't taken care of by food, tooth paste, soap and water, or any amount of money. Don't have any illusions, however; it is no graduate course in psychiatry. No book can solve your personal problems if they are serious. However, it ought to give you a little better understanding of yourself and how you tick. The chances are it will help you know yourself and other people a little better.

FOREWORD

There are several ways we can look on the stretch of years during which we live on this earth. Some seem to regard it as a knock-down, drag-out fight with no quarter given. Others seem to breeze along having a good time, no matter what happens. Most of us land somewhere in between and take our share of the good times with the bad ones, being happy part of the time and miserable another part.

Whether we look at the individual man's coping with all of the things in the world outside of himself as a battle with that world, an adjustment or an adaptation to it, or as a sort of friendly puppy-like tussle that is good, pleasant exercise, may be as much a matter of philosophy as psychiatry, depending on our point of view.

Any way we play the game of life, the outcome will depend on the strength of the personality. The personality is what other people know as you. It is made up of more than what meets the eye at a quick, or even a long, glance.

Most of us, when we are well and sober, believe that we know why we do what we do. But the psychiatrists tell us that this isn't true, and the evidence seems to stack up all in their favor. If we are quite honest with ourselves, we cannot always see the reasons for our behavior. After a reaction to a particular situation or person we sometimes find ourselves wondering how we could have been so stupid? So rude? So angry? So passive? So silly? We may even be emotionally upset by our concern over the way we behaved. In other words all of us have moments

when we know that we don't quite understand ourselves.

How can we learn to behave "normally" and "naturally" and "appropriately"? Those are the questions that the psychiatrist tries to answer for the people who come to see him professionally. All of us need some help every now and then. At least some of the knowledge which the psychiatrist uses can be helpful to anyone who understands it. On the assumption that a lot of people want it, the authors have tried to present such knowledge in easily understandable terms.

This is a presentation of what the psychoanalytic psychiatrists believe the personality is, its development, its structure, its mode of action. In short it is a description of the anatomy and the physiology of the personality. We will try to lift the "average" personality off the street or out of the sitting room and take it to pieces in order to demonstrate its parts and explain how they came to be what they are. We will try to show how that personality operates and some of the results of good or bad operation, as the psychiatrist understands them.

Right at the start we ought to tell you that psychiatry is the branch of medicine, that concerns itself with the study (the diagnosis), the treatment and the prevention of all types of psychological difficulties. The psychiatrist is a physician (an M.D.—"doctor of medicine") who in the course of his medical education and hospital internship did what every other doctor has to do. He learned about bacteria and physiology, set broken bones and did minor surgery, made blood and urine examinations and treated heart cases and diabetes. After all that, he spent five more years in specialized training and experience in the field of psychiatry. Then if he wished to qualify and be listed as a "specialist," he had to take and pass special examinations of the American Board of Neurology and Psychiatry. The statement of these well-known facts is important for the reason that an amazing number of people do not know

just what psychiatry is and how a psychiatrist is trained.

In this book are some statements of psychiatric theory and some illustrations of the cause and effect of human behavior. Each reader will probably see himself in the following pages, for the general principles outlined are applicable to us all. For the sake of his orientation certain facts are basic to an accurate understanding of human behavior.

First, it is impossible to describe a "normal" personality for there is no one pattern of development or action that is "ideal" for everyone. *All of us* have eccentricities and neurotic symptoms. Periodically we all have doubts and worries. We have trouble with our children and they have trouble with us. There are hundreds of varieties of personality strengths and handicaps. There are varying degrees and types of adjustment and maladjustment. With our assets and liabilities, or in spite of these, most of us get along reasonably comfortably. Perhaps explanations of the variations and the causes of the handicaps can enable us to live more satisfactorily.

Second, the two energy drives that make us go are aggressiveness and the desire to and need for love. It is the aggressive drive that causes our difficulties. Because of the hostile and destructive element in it, it gets you and me into most of our troubles, whether they concern ourselves or others. Truly loving or being loved (called the erotic drive) never hurts anyone. But all aggression isn't "bad," in fact it takes some aggressiveness to love, as well as most of the other things we do. On the other hand, there are many varieties of relationships in loving and being loved that are not "good." Smothering love, binding love, jealous love—are harmful and become problems because of the type of aggression in them, not because of the love.

Third, the reader should understand that feelings and behavior are chiefly the result of development and train-

ing. Our inheritance does have something to do with the way in which we develop but by comparison with the environment it is of minor importance. As we gain more understanding of ourselves and therefore of our psychological status we can see how we can improve. Unless a person actually has a defective brain he *can* become more mature, the ideal goal for every personality. Lots of us need to grow up psychologically—to forego childish techniques and emotional attachments, to learn to control ourselves emotionally, to find our greatest satisfaction in giving rather than in receiving. Therefore, it is the hope of the authors that as the result of perusing these pages the reader will increase his knowledge of the personality and thus perhaps be able to help himself mature and to deal more intelligently with other people, particularly the younger generation.

Sufficient understanding of ourselves should make us more tolerant of the behavior of others. It is so easy to misjudge or call names and it is so hard to get the mote out of our own eyes. Would that we had the perspicacity of a legless combat veteran who made the remark that he didn't see how he could ever know a buddy well enough to call him a coward!

A fourth point the authors want to make is that *intellectual acceptance* of the relation between emotional stress and personality development may aid in solving personal problems. For example, the misdirection of the aggressive drive into expressions of hate, stubbornness, meanness, jealousy and envy—the festering boils in our everyday lives—can usually be traced to childhood difficulties in adjustment. The fact that we *know* these emotions are irrational and have forgotten and obscure origins in infancy *can* provide a basis for some intellectual control. We don't have to have a complete understanding of their origin in order to reduce their incidence. While it is desirable for a fire department to know what started a fire,

it is not necessary to know the cause before trying to put it out. All that *must* be done is to recognize that there is a fire and then do something about it.

There are a thousand homely illustrations of the applications of this principle to human behavior. If running the town or the club interferes with the necessity of running a business or a home we do not have to find the psychological explanation of why we allow ourselves to become too deeply involved. We only have to recognize priorities in our lives and at the same time endeavor to meet the need for inner satisfaction in ways that do not interfere with the "musts."

At the same time we offer reassurance to the readers of their ability to modify childhood-formed patterns of reaction we must warn against expecting too much from their efforts in that direction. Reading a cook book isn't going to change an amateur into a professional chef. Daily brushing of teeth does not prevent all cavities. Perusing this bit of light reading about *some* of our psychological anatomy and how it functions isn't going to make us into 100% well-adjusted personalities automatically.

As much as we all wish for it, there isn't anyone (including the authors of this book!) who is qualified to hand out neat little prescriptions that are guaranteed to cure all aches, pains, worries and fears. Here and there the reader will find some specific leads to a better understanding which may—we say *may*—enable him to live more easily with the day-by-day reactions of his family, his friends and himself.

Smooth sailing in life depends not on placebos and panaceas but on the craft (our personalities), the weather (the temper of our associates), and the navigation (our skill in steering a wise course).

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

OUR MACHINERY

MOST PEOPLE know something about the human body—that it has a digestive system, a heart, a pair of lungs, and a lot of other systems and organs that are very important. Some of these we all talk about more or less intelligently. Others we discuss only hesitantly. However, at the mere mention of one, many people get cross.

The organ located in our heads, known as the brain, is well known. But even about it people get mixed up and talk about "having lots of brains" as if there were several of them or perhaps thinking of it as they would wheat or potatoes. Actually, a man has *a* brain which weighs a little over two pounds. In proportion to the size of the body, it is larger in man than in any other animal. We know it has much to do with thinking and feeling and acting, but actually we cannot locate many functions in specific areas or parts of it.

It is divided into two "hemispheres." In general, the right one controls the left half of the body and the left controls the right half of the body. In each hemisphere there is a little area about the size of a pocket knife that controls all of our motor activity and one of similar small size that registers sensation. The area that controls speech isn't much bigger than a dime and is located on the oppo-

site side from our "handedness": if you are right-handed, it is on the left side of your brain; if left-handed it is on the right side. In the back part is another small area that has to do with vision. At least two-thirds of the surface of the brain, however, is "terra-incognito" insofar as any specific function is concerned.

To and from the brain go a lot of nerves, like telegraph wires. Some of them run to the eyes, the ears and the tongue and other parts of the head. There are twelve of these—the cranial nerves. Then the great bulk of telegraph wires combine into one solid trunk that we call the spinal cord which runs down inside our backbone. At the level of each vertebra, a pair of nerves flow out to cover the adjacent area of the body.

Very simply there are three sets of nerves that connect up the brain, through the spinal cord, with the muscles, the skin and all the organs inside of us. One of these sets takes the incoming calls such as the sensations of touch or pain or temperature which are received by any part of the body; another group takes over the message from these incoming wires and conducts them up to the headquarters—the brain. The third set is the outgoing bunch that produces action. They are the ones that start us doing something about a particular situation.

The networks of nerves serve two nervous systems. One of these is the *autonomic* or the *involuntary nervous system*. This system controls and regulates the action of most of our organs, including the heart, stomach, intestines, blood vessels and sweat glands. It has both direct and indirect connections with the *voluntary nervous system* (brain, spinal cord and nerves) which helps us do what we *think* we want to do, whether it is moving an arm, taking a walk or making a speech. To illustrate the fact that there is no voluntary control of the autonomic nervous system, put a spoonful of food in your mouth and see how much control you have over what happens to it

from there on. Or, try to prevent yourself from blushing or stop it once started.

These nerve connections are very complicated. There are a lot of short-cuts possible so that sometimes a message comes into the spinal cord that never has to go up to general headquarters—the brain—but connects up directly with the outgoing nerves that produce action. Thus, if you tap yourself just below the kneecap, with your leg crossed, the chances are that your foot will kick. In this case the sensation goes into the spinal cord and then right at the same level connects up with the nerves that go to the muscle and produce action. This sort of response is called *reflex* and the machinery which produces it is known as a *reflex arc.*

There are a lot of different types of reflexes. They are very important to the physician in his examination because they are sensitive to slight changes. Some of the ones present in the healthy individual disappear in sickness, and others develop as a result of nerve disease. In all cases they represent a direct connection between the sensory and motor nerves so that the impulse never has to go through the "higher centers" to produce action.

Another type of somewhat automatic behavior comes as the result of experience. Much of it seems to become reflex although we originally had to learn what to do. For example, the initial discovery that fire was hot and that it hurt connected up the nerve pathways so strongly that later messages about fire could get fast action. Pulling a finger off a hot stove isn't a reflex but it is illustrative of behavior that becomes automatic and takes place without thinking, *a conditioned reflex.*

So far, all we have said has to do with machinery that you can examine in anatomical specimens and under the microscope. The fact remains, however, that there is a big gap between this physical machinery and the thinking, feeling, acting person. Scientists are still a long way from

being able to explain the thinking and feeling of people entirely on the basis of our knowledge about the brain or nerve anatomy and physiology.

Unquestionably, much of this activity goes on in the brain but the brain is only a part of the total mechanism. The endocrine glands, such as the thyroid, adrenals, ovaries, testicles and others whose secretions pass directly into the blood affect one's behavior. The process of metabolism is another factor. It is the process by which we build up and break down our body tissues, some of us slowly and some of us rapidly. A major influence on the development of our physical structure, including brain and spinal cord (and therefore our thinking-feeling-acting self), is what we get from our parents—our inheritance.

Thinking is not just a matter of brain cell activity, emotion isn't just glandular activity, and action isn't just muscle activity. They are all inescapably bound together. Consequently one cannot spell out, even in a complicated explanation, a complete description of the total machinery of the person in order to explain how he thinks and feels and acts.

Even though the psychiatrist does not know enough about the anatomy of the personality to explain all these reactions, he can and does make observations about the psychological life which can be arranged in a systematic fashion. Such a study is not a description of the machinery but rather a classification of various expressions of the total person. In addition to the physical and chemical aspects, the psychiatrist systematically investigates the psychological aspects of the personality. Most of these are only the conscious expressions of the personality in response to its internal and external demands. There are several different systems of organization of such data. One convenient classification of psychological life has four divisions—Perception, Intellection, Emotion and Volition.

PERCEPTION: Perception is the psychological activity

involved in the receiving and the interpretation of sensations from the sense organs—eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin. Once received, these sensations automatically are referred up to the General Headquarters in the brain. There, on the basis of past experience, they are recognized and interpreted. The interpretation may be an automatic recognition if it's an old sensation. If it's a new one, it is compared with old ones.

There are lots of variations in the acuteness and accuracy of perception in ordinary life. Much of this variation depends upon an individual's past experience; it depends on the degree of alertness; sometimes it depends on the nature of physical phenomena. Everyone has periods when he's a little confused or disoriented, as for instance when awakened suddenly from a deep sleep. On the other hand, everyone has moments or situations in which he is hyper-alert and can hear or see more acutely. Then there are those natural phenomena such as mirages and other types of what are known as optical illusions which prevent our sensations from telling us the truth. There are variations in the capacities of persons to perceive, some of which are inherited and others of which are dependent on the physical machinery. For instance some people are born blind to color; that's usually an inherited trait. Some of us can see much better at night than others. Some people have a special ability to hear musical tones of a very high pitch. Many special capacities can be specially cultivated so that the blind man's fingers can become sufficiently sensitive to make up in some degree for his lack of sight; the wine taster's taste buds become sensitive to differences that most of us would ordinarily miss; some people can stand pain more stoically than others.

The second large field of psychological life is called INTELLECTION. That includes the thinking processes, as well as the storehouse of memories, called knowledge.