

## Obituary Notices.

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### SIGMUND FREUD.

SIGMUND FREUD, the greatest psychologist the world has ever known, passed away on September 25. He belonged to the race which has been persecuted from time immemorial. His own ancestors, who had long settled on the Rhine, were hounded from Cologne to Lithuania in the fifteenth century. Thence they migrated through Galicia to Austria. Freud himself was born in Moravia on May 6, 1856. At the age of four he went to Vienna, which became his home for the remainder of his life, until—through the kindness of English friends—he was evacuated to this country from the Nazi persecution. He had always been an admirer of the English character. One obituary notice states that he was kindly treated by the Germans. He was not ; unless confiscation of half his money and property and the battering of his son by storm troopers are to be regarded as kindness !

At school he was at the top of his class for seven years. He was originally trained for the law, but then took to medicine, and was particularly interested in the physiology and anatomy of the nervous system. Indeed, he lectured on both these subjects, did valuable research and, so far as I know, his method of staining axis-cylinders has never been superseded.

Owing to financial considerations he had to abandon such non-lucrative work and became a physician, still maintaining his interest in the nervous system, and in due course he studied under Charcot at the Saltpetrière. Hence he took to hypnotism, which he practised among his patients in Vienna ; but he was dissatisfied with its results and by good fortune came into contact with Breuer, who had discerned in one of his hysterical patients an underlying mental mechanism. He discussed this patient with Freud, and gave him his first glimpse into unconscious processes of the mind.

After this he gradually gave up hypnotism and worked along psycho-analytical lines, but it was not until 1896 that he gave the name " psycho-analysis " to his method. He pursued his researches absolutely alone and in the face of the fiercest opposition until 1907, when a few disciples began to gather round him. The number grew, and in 1910 was large enough to found the International Psycho-analytical Association, which to-day has branches in Great Britain, France, Holland, Switzerland, Russia, Denmark, Norway, Palestine, America (5), and until recently in Germany, Austria and Hungary.

Nevertheless, opposition to psycho-analysis did not die down and probably

never will, owing to its truths being intrinsically of an unpleasant nature to most people, revealing as it does that man is not master of his own mind. Feeling along these lines has at times run very high. Indeed in 1917 the then President of our Association wrote a letter to the *British Medical Journal* denouncing psycho-analysis. Several resignations from our Association followed and even from the British Medical Association, so he wrote another letter stating that he was expressing merely his own views and not those of the Medico-Psychological Association, although, without doubt, he would have received overwhelming support had a plebiscite been taken. It will be remembered too that it was about this time that Mercier wrote accusing "Psycho-analists" of practising their profession in order to gratify their own sexual passions; also he deliberately spelt Freud's name "Fraud". Of course he did not know Freud, for he would have found him to be a man of the highest integrity, to whom anything approaching deception or ever insincerity was absolutely foreign and abhorrent, a scrupulous enthusiast for the truth, whose distinguishing trait was—as Dr. Ernest Jones justly pronounced in his funeral oration—"nobility of character".

Freud was a man who would listen patiently to informed criticism, but criticism based on ignorance he simply disregarded; for he discerned more clearly than the critic himself or any other man the unconscious motives which lay behind. Errant disciples have experienced the lash of his tongue probably more than others, but at the same time he had a sparkling wit.

To trace the history of psycho-analysis would be beyond the scope of this notice. Is it not written in the hundreds of lengthy papers and books by Freud himself? A brief account of his life and work is to be found in his *Autobiographical Study*, translated by James Strachey and published by the Hogarth Press.

Freud was a great linguist; he spoke many tongues fluently and his English was perfect. Indeed he was of the greatest assistance to some of his translators. He was familiar with all the literature that mattered in almost every language, and his general knowledge was encyclopædic.

He knew well enough that he was a great man, yet he was modest withal. Although he raised psychology from the rank of a purely academic study to a living science, pursuing its ramifications into every other branch of knowledge bearing on the study of man—history, anthropology, folk-lore, mythology, religion, education, everyday life, wit, literature, art and others—yet he writes: "The sphere of application of psycho-analysis extends as far as psychology, to which it forms a complement of the greatest moment. Looking over the patchwork of my life's labours I can say that I have made many beginnings and thrown out many suggestions. Something will come of them in future, though I cannot myself tell whether it will be much or little. I can, however, express a hope that I have opened up a pathway for an important advance in our knowledge."

Three years ago, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, the Royal Medico-Psychological Association elected him to its Honorary Membership.

Freud had no fear of death, but those who loved him were relieved to know that at long last he was released from the dreadful pain of his fatal illness which had threatened him for years.

W. H. B. STODDART.

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### HENRY HAVELOCK ELLIS.

HENRY HAVELOCK ELLIS, who passed away in July, had been an Honorary Member of our Association for fifteen years, but he never attended a meeting, for he disliked public gatherings, and his retiring nature never allowed him to address one.

Born at Croydon in 1859, he came of sea-faring stock on both sides of the family, and his earliest years were spent at sea. Indeed he received his beginnings of education at sea. Up to the age of twelve he attended a private school near London. Thence he was transferred to Australia, where he soon became a schoolmaster, and at the age of nineteen he became headmaster of a private school there.

All this early travel, together with his wanderings in Australia, gave Ellis a sense of the world-as-a-spectacle, a desire for adjustment of the cosmos, and at the age of nineteen he decided to study medicine, not as a career, but as a biological foundation for his life's work.

He went to St. Thomas's Hospital and took the L.S.A., but his interests at the time were sociological. In 1882 he was instrumental in founding the Progressive Association for the Promotion of Intellectual and Social Well-being, but there soon came a split, the object of the minority of whom Ellis was one being "the subordination of material things to spiritual", while the majority formed the beginning of the Fabian Society.

Temperamentally he was an artist, regarding Living as the supreme art, and he used to write of such subordinate arts as The Art of Love, The Art of Thinking, The Art of Religion, The Art of Morals, The Art of Dancing and The Art of Writing. He found beauty in everything.

It was probably his sociological interests and activity that brought him into contact with many literary giants of the day, and in 1887-89 he edited the unexpurgated Mermaid Series of Elizabethan dramatists. Then he started the *Contemporary Science Series*, which continued until 1914. As we all know, many of these are classics.

But the monumental work of his life was of course his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897-1908). As a pioneer he approached this study, not with