

PSYCHIATRY IN THE CRIMINAL COURTS OF COOK COUNTY*

BY

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Organization.—The Behavior Clinic of the Criminal Court of Cook County, which came into existence April 1, 1931, is essentially a diagnostic clinic, giving advisory psychiatric service to the Judges of the Criminal Court. The Clinic is disinterested in the legal aspect of the cases referred for examination. Its aim is the intensive study of the individual offender—his mental, physical and emotional make-up—his environment, and the interaction of that individual and that environment. It is hoped that such a scientific study will make for a better understanding of criminals and the forces motivating anti-social behavior and thus help to combat the menace of crime to society.

Scope and Method.—A psychiatric examination may be availed for any offender whom the presiding judge sees fit to have examined. Requests for examinations are made for numerous reasons, the most frequent of which are: 1) to determine the sanity of the individual; 2) to determine his intellectual capacity; 3) to determine his suitability for probation.

Every patient referred to the Behavior Clinic is given several types of examination: 1) a psychological examination by the psychologist to ascertain his mental ability and to determine what can be expected of him in terms of social and industrial adjustment; 2) a comprehensive social history of the patient from relatives, friends, other agencies and individuals who have had contact with him, to learn all the pertinent facts concerning his family background, early life history, later experiences, and a detailed study of his environment in an effort to arrive at a more thorough understanding of the patient in view of his background; 3) a physical examination with special attention to constitutional and neurological defects when such an examination appears necessary; 4) a psychiatric examination by the psychiatrist: (a) to evaluate the personality manifestations of the person; (b) to coordinate all findings and from them make a report to the judge for use in determining the disposition of the case.

Before the hearing copies of the psychiatric examination and conclusions are sent simultaneously to the presiding judge, State's Attorney, and attorney for the defense. After legal disposition of the case copies of the psychiatric, psychological and social service reports are sent to the institution to which the patient is committed or sentenced, or to the Adult Probation Department should he be granted probation.

Referrals.—Since the Clinic's inception 790 cases have been referred for examination, of which 316 were referred during the fiscal year of 1933, an increase of 3 per cent over the number of referrals in 1932. Of these, 302 cases received the routine psychiatric and psychological examinations and

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