

*A Case of Double Personality.*<sup>(1)</sup> By BERNARD HART, M.B., Lecturer in Psychiatry, University College Hospital Medical School, Assistant Medical Officer, Long Grove Asylum.

DOUBLE personality is a fascinating subject, and has always possessed a peculiar attraction both for the professional psychologist and the layman—owing, no doubt, to the strange and often dramatic character of its manifestations.

It is hoped, therefore, that a few notes upon an actual case may be of interest. These notes relate to a case belonging to the group of the psychoneuroses, a case of considerable complexity, and one which was subjected to a prolonged psychological investigation. The episodes connected with the double personality form, indeed, only a single chapter in a long history.

I shall only attempt to relate as much of the other portions of this history as is necessary for the understanding of the chapter in question. This chapter is of exceptional interest in that I was able to witness both the birth and—I believe—the final disappearance of the secondary personality.

The patient, whom we will call John Smith, a clerk in a business house, æt. 28, was admitted to the asylum with a certificate stating little beyond the fact that he had sent threatening telegrams to various people, and had occasionally been observed to behave in a somewhat irresponsible manner.

He was clear, collected, and to a cursory examination presented little that was abnormal. He stated that he had been assured by his wife that he had sent the telegrams, and that it might perhaps be true, but that he himself had no recollection whatever of doing so.

A careful examination showed, however, that the sending of the telegrams formed only a single episode in a whole section of his past life, ranging over several weeks, the contents of which were entirely forgotten. Moreover, it was found that chequered throughout the preceding few years there were other similar totally forgotten periods. He would remember, for example, starting for the office one morning—then would come a blank—and, perhaps a week later, he would “wake up,” as it

were, to find himself in some infirmary, with no recollection of how he got there, or of anything that had happened during the preceding week. On these occasions he would be informed that he had been found by the police wandering aimlessly about, or that his relatives had discovered him in some lodging-house far from his home.

During one of these periods he sent the telegrams, and during each he behaved in the irresponsible manner mentioned in the certificate.

A history of this kind at once suggests the existence of hysterical amnesias or "fugues"—phenomena which have been familiar to us since they were fully described and investigated by the French psychologists of last century. This diagnosis was confirmed by the complete analysis of the case subsequently made.

Now it is well known that in these hysterical cases the lost memories belonging to the forgotten periods are frequently recoverable by hypnosis. This procedure was therefore employed in the present instance, and with a successful result. Hypnosis was induced without much difficulty, and the patient was then able to recount all the previously forgotten events which had occurred during each "fugue" period, and to give a detailed account of his wanderings. By this means all the blanks in the patient's history were finally filled up.

So much for the history preceding the chapter in which the secondary personality appeared. Before passing on to that chapter I may be permitted to make a few remarks concerning certain theories which were employed in the investigation of the case.

The view is now becoming widely accepted that hysterical amnesias and other symptoms belonging to the same group are a result of psychical conflict, the existence in the mind of elements which conflict with the trend of the mind as a whole. In consequence of this conflict the elements in question have been subjected to the process known as "repression"; that is to say, they have been buried, as it were, and put out of gear with the rest of consciousness.

This theory was acted upon in our present case, and a prolonged investigation was made to ascertain whether such buried elements existed. The analysis was successful, and a complicated and interconnected system of conflicts was found, which

satisfactorily explained the symptoms observed. To detail their nature would take us far beyond the limits of the present communication—and, moreover, such a procedure is not in the least necessary for the purpose we have in hand. All that concerns us here is what happened during the process of resuscitating these buried elements.

It must be remembered, by the way, that the elements in question lay at a deeper level than the memories recovered by hypnosis. The latter were merely memories of events which happened during the amnesic periods—for example, that the patient wandered from such a place to such a place—whereas the buried elements which it was now sought to discover furnished the forces responsible for these wanderings—that is to say, they explained why the patient behaved in this extraordinary manner.

It has been pointed out that these elements are *repressed*, and hence that there is a resistance to their being resuscitated. They are intrinsically unpleasant to the mind ; the mind refuses to think of them, and adopts every method possible to avoid thinking of them.

Now it was during this process of resuscitation that the secondary personality made its first appearance.

The circumstances of this first appearance were as follows : The patient had just been visited by an uncle, whom he professed greatly to dislike. The explanation of this dislike lay, by the way, in the fact that the uncle was closely connected with some of the buried memories whose existence has been mentioned. After the visit was over I interviewed the patient. He seemed slightly confused and constrained. I began to question him concerning the causes of his aversion to his uncle. The patient's demeanour, hitherto always very courteous, rapidly began to change. Finally he burst into a rage, and when I mentioned events which he had himself told me on former occasions, vowed that his uncle must have been tattling, as he had certainly never told me anything of the sort. He then maintained that he had only seen me on one occasion before, and laughed contemptuously when I pointed out that we had already had at least twenty prolonged interviews. When I mentioned further events of his past life formerly elicited from him, he asked me what on earth I meant, and suggested that I must be mad, and that a bicycle ride in the country would

probably cool my heated brain and bring me to my senses. Then he suddenly sat down, complained of headache, and in a few seconds returned to his usual condition, with a complete amnesia for everything that had occurred since the visit of his uncle.

After this occasion the new personality frequently appeared. In order to distinguish it from the personality usually present I christened it "the one-fifth man." The name originated from a conversation with the patient in which I tried to explain his condition by saying that he was like a man who never appeared as a whole—but that sometimes four-fifths of him occupied the stage, sometimes a chipped-off piece, comprising the remaining one-fifth.

The "one-fifth man" underwent a rapid development, and was subsequently a much more complicated person than on the occasion of his first appearance.

He was always suspicious and hostile, with an unconcealed aversion to myself. He was, moreover, always absolutely ignorant of the buried memories which had been elicited in former stages of the analysis, and of the fact that he had ever submitted himself to hypnosis, and always became angrily incredulous when any of these subjects were touched upon.

On the first occasion he had no idea where he was, did not know how he got here, and remembered nothing of the events of the preceding few months. Later, however, as the secondary personality developed he acquired knowledge of all these things, and was able in this state to go about his ordinary work in the asylum without arousing any suspicion in those who were not intimately acquainted with him.

The hostile attitude towards myself persisted unabated throughout his entire career. The ordinary personality, on the other hand, was very friendly to me, and very grateful for the time I devoted to his case.

On the day following the first appearance of the one-fifth man I again endeavoured to question the patient concerning the causes of his aversion to his uncle. He again became very agitated, and in a few moments the "one-fifth man" was once more on the scene, with all the same characters present as on the preceding day. He remembered perfectly everything that had happened during his previous appearance, but nothing else.

This localised memory was always observed when the one-

fifth man was present ; he remembered all his former appearances, but nothing that had happened while the four-fifths personality was in possession of the field. *Per contra*, the four-fifths personality remembered nothing that happened while the one-fifth man was in command.

There is one point which will immediately strike us. On both the occasions described the "one-fifth man" had appeared so soon as the patient was questioned concerning his aversion to the uncle. Now further experience showed that the one-fifth man was always produced by an occasion of this character ; he always appeared whenever a "sore spot" was touched—that is, whenever there was a danger of one of the buried memories or conflicts being brought to the surface. It will be seen later that this point is of fundamental importance to our understanding of the genesis of the second personality.

On an occasion a few days later, when the one-fifth man was again on the scene and abusing me with his customary vigour and directness, I persuaded him to commit some of his statements to writing. He produced the following document :

"(1) I refuse to accept Dr. Hart's statements referring to numerous lapses of memory. None have ever occurred. (2) Positive of the fact that the number of visits to the doctor has not exceeded three. (3) Dr. Hart forced certain remarks upon me and I told him he was off-colour and bilious, and advised him to take a cycle ride. (4) He suggested that I had made a bedroom of his sitting-room, and I refused to accept this statement also.

"(Signed)  
"JOHN SMITH."

The last remark concerning "making a bedroom of his sitting-room" referred, of course, to my statement that he had been frequently hypnotised.

Subsequently the one-fifth man began to write letters to me. They were invariably hostile and abusive in tone. The four-fifths personality had no knowledge of these effusions, and was always grieved and distressed when I showed them to him.

A single example of these letters, selected from a large number, is reproduced here. This particular one is especially interesting, partly on account of the insulting but delightfully humorous postscript which concludes it, partly because I subsequently showed it to the four-fifths personality, and he wrote an indignant repudiation of it on the same sheet. This double

communication, therefore, excellently illustrates the opposing characters of the two personalities.

"SIR,—I beg to inform you that our acquaintance must close. It will be best to have no communication with each other in the future. I have determined not to speak to you again.

"I am,

"Yours truly,

"JOHN SMITH."

"P.S.—Things that are equal to the same thing are equal to one another, *i.e.*, as people here are *too stupid* to recognise *your stupidity* you remain here, and you yourself must recognise this. It is fitting that you should have the tender care of imbeciles. Sane people would not tolerate you."

This production was subsequently shown to the four-fifths personality, and the latter promptly wrote the following remarks on the back of the same sheet :

"During the whole of my interviews with Dr. Hart my attitude has always been one of extreme cordiality, and this has lasted for the past two months. The rubbish written on the previous page is obviously untrue, and betrays many ideas unworthy of my real self.

"JOHN SMITH."

The animosity of the one-fifth man to me was so marked, and his demeanour occasionally so threatening, that it became advisable to have some means of controlling him. I accomplished this by the employment of post-hypnotic suggestion. The patient was hypnotised when in his relatively normal state, and it was suggested to him that if the one-fifth man were ever on the scene, the ordinary personality would immediately reappear if I showed the patient a certain small metal object. This suggestion was always successful, and I could subsequently produce either of the two personalities at will—the one-fifth man by deliberately touching upon one of the "sore spots," the four-fifths state by utilising the previously given post-hypnotic suggestion.

Now a few words as to the explanation of the genesis of the one-fifth man.

This secondary personality was not in any way identical with the fugues which had been present prior to the patient's admission. On the contrary, during the second state he had no memory whatever of the events which had occurred during the fugues, and was contemptuously incredulous when I mentioned their existence.

The birth of the one-fifth man was entirely due to the psychological investigation to which the patient was being subjected at this time. The one-fifth man may be regarded, indeed, as a kind of psychological artefact.

It has been pointed out that the investigation consisted in the bringing to the surface of certain buried memories and conflicts, and that to this process of resuscitation a resistance was always opposed ; that is to say, the mind refused as far as possible to allow the mental elements in question to make their appearance in the field of consciousness. Everyone will be acquainted with minor examples of this method of avoiding the unpleasant things in life by deliberately ignoring their existence.

Now the one-fifth man may be regarded as a kind of crystallisation of this resistance, his essence consisted in an elaborate and very efficient defence against the process of investigation which I was carrying out.

He had an intense animosity to me, and endeavoured to belittle me in every way. He strove to cast scorn upon my intelligence and my methods, and hence to destroy the importance and genuineness of the buried memories which my methods were eliciting. He was blankly ignorant of all these buried memories, and by no process of persuasion could be got to acknowledge their existence or import. Generally, indeed, the whole of the period during which he held the stage was occupied in unremitting abuse of myself. One could not help being reminded of the story of the defending barrister, whose brief was marked by the solicitor, "No case—abuse the plaintiff."

It will now be clear why the one-fifth man always appeared whenever the investigation was getting dangerously near one of the buried memories. He represented a concentrated resistance to the resuscitation of the elements in question, and so long as he was present it was, indeed, absolutely impossible to proceed with the analysis. Only by the exercise of considerable circumspection in the approaching of the "sore spots," and by the method of control already mentioned, could any progress be made.

As the analysis reached a more advanced stage, however, and the buried memories were brought to the surface one by one, the one-fifth man diminished in potency and virulence, until

finally, when the analysis was sufficiently complete, and the majority of the repressed elements had been recovered, he altogether disappeared from the scene.

The analysis of the case as a whole does not enter into the limited sphere with which my communication is alone concerned. I have, indeed, deliberately refrained from mentioning the content of any of the repressed elements or conflicts, in order not to confuse the real significance of the secondary personality. I may say, however, that the analysis was brought to a successful conclusion, and the patient has been for some time in a normal condition.

(<sup>1</sup>) Read at the Quarterly Meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association, Long Grove Asylum, February 22nd, 1912.

---

*Aphasia in General Paralysis and the Conditions associated with it.* By EDWARD MAPOTHER, M.D.Lond., F.R.C.S.Eng., Assistant Medical Officer, Long Grove Asylum.

CERTAIN features of the speech defects commonly seen in general paralysis bear a resemblance to aphasia, *e.g.*, inability to find required words, and the tendency to omit syllables or words without noticing it, or to transpose syllables or the vowels of successive words. More definite aphasia, however, may occur in general paralysis either as a transitory or lasting symptom. Though it may arise under a variety of conditions it is distinctly uncommon.

This paper is based on the clinical observation and *post-mortem* findings in cases of general paralysis at Long Grove Asylum. Among the subjects of the first 973 *post-mortem* examinations after the opening of Long Grove Asylum there were 273 general paralytics; 226 cases of the disease among 633 *post-mortems* on male patients, and 47 cases among 340 on females.

Aphasia may co-exist with general paralysis as a purely accidental concomitant, *e.g.*, as the result of trauma or of embolism from valvular disease. An instance of the former association of conditions is mentioned in a recent paper by MacFie Campbell (1).



# BJPpsych

The British Journal of Psychiatry

## A Case of Double Personality

Bernard Hart

*BJP* 1912, 58:236-243.

Access the most recent version at DOI: [10.1192/bjp.58.241.236](https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.58.241.236)

---

### References

This article cites 0 articles, 0 of which you can access for free at:

<http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/58/241/236.citation#BIBL>

### Reprints/ permissions

To obtain reprints or permission to reproduce material from this paper, please write to [permissions@rcpsych.ac.uk](mailto:permissions@rcpsych.ac.uk)

### You can respond to this article at

[/letters/submit/bjprcpsych;58/241/236](http://letters.submit/bjprcpsych;58/241/236)

### Downloaded from

<http://bjp.rcpsych.org/> on January 30, 2017  
Published by The Royal College of Psychiatrists

---