

accounted for by the dominance of some one or other of the mental faculties over the remainder. This dominance he names mental orientation (*l'orientation d'esprit*).

Looking at these discussions as a whole, one cannot help feeling that both the method employed and the results obtained are sometimes not quite satisfactory, and one wishes, even in other cases, that the results had been worked over more thoroughly. But it seems to us that the *Année* is both interesting and valuable; it suggests a great deal of work yet to be done, in addition to the valuable results which it actually conveys; and this is one of the great services of any book. Excepting the discussion of Ribot, probably the best work in this number is contained in the articles on the capillary pulse, the heart and the respiration, and these are as interesting from a physiological as from a psychological point of view.

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#### THE QUESTIONNAIRES FROM CLARK UNIVERSITY.

*A Study of Fears.* G. STANLEY HALL. *Am. Journal of Psychology*, VIII., 147-249. Jan., 1897.

The chief aim of this article is to emphasize the influence of ancestral experience and selection in the formation of the multitudinous fears of childhood and youth. These fears are taken to be in part true instincts and an effort is made to show their origin. So with fears of falling, of high places, of confinement, of water, the heavenly bodies, darkness, shock, various animals, of eyes, teeth, fur and of strangers. Fears of thunder and of ghosts are referred back to the times of primitive religion.

While all ought to agree that this hypothesis is a proper one to test, it may well be claimed that the author has in its service misused the facts from his questionnaire replies. In his discussion of the primeval experience of hovering, he gives no clear reason why falling should be instinctively *feared*, and does not notice that fear *when* falling, fear *of* falling, and objectless fear when on high places, are three quite different things. Again, an instinctive fear of water seems less probable than its direct opposite, an instinctive ability to swim. To attribute fears of sky, cloud, etc., to 'echoes of the grander and more awful phenomena of primeval weather' is certainly a strain. Finally the fear of teeth ought, on this basis, to be more prevalent than

it appears to be. Moreover there is nothing in the extent of these human fears to match the universality of a genuine animal instinct. Children do not fear thunder or snakes as mice do a cat. Some carefully observed cases show no fear at all. Thus those previously inclined to leave all to individual experience and imitation may well fail to see Dr. Hall's conclusions in his data.

A few additional considerations may prevent such a rejection. Distaste at confinement, fear at shock and of large strange objects, are so common amongst animals and so prevalent in very young stages of human life that they are presumably instinctive. Yet they figure very little in the questionnaire replies. So the tendency of the questionnaire may have been really to discourage the reporting of instinctive cases. Further, very many instinctive fears (if there be such) are undoubtedly temporary and may pass without any chance for manifestation and record. Dr. Hall's evidence also suffers in quality because of the too great age of the subjects.

More fruitful than a host of questionnaires would be, I should think, a set of experiments on children from birth on, in circumstances where their experience of and instruction about things could be regulated and its influence as a disturbing factor completely known. Then an instinctive act would be unmistakable.

*The Psychology of Tickling, Laughing and the Comic.* G.

STANLEY HALL and ARTHUR ALLIN. *Am. Jour. of Psychology*, IX., 14-2. October, 1897.

In discussing ticklishness the authors invoke, to help explain the sensitiveness to minimal touch, the early psychic life when touch was the only sense. It thus represents 'the very oldest stratum of psychic life.' Another factor in developing ticklishness is said to be experience with parasites. The different degrees of ticklishness in different parts of the body point to its origin from 'gestures of danger without any strong sense of it.' Finally minimal contact is classed as the trace 'of the first pleasures not directly due to food or sex, with which psychic development began.' One finds it hard to get any harmonious theory out of these several notions, and the declaration that reactions to *slightly* noxious stimuli are more likely to be inherited than reactions to stimuli which injure an animal enough to decrease its vigor and reproductive efficiency, is a rash one to make in the face of present-day views of heredity.

That children so often laugh at animals is, in connection with the facts of imitation, referred to their being nearer 'the parting of the