

recognised. It is commonly asserted to be due to the effect of psychical trauma acting on a mind congenitally unstable in certain respects. Those who hold this "traumatic" view would probably find no difficulty in explaining the case described above, and in attributing it to the action of the physical and mental stress just specified. This view undoubtedly contains a modicum of truth, but the incompleteness of it becomes more and more apparent the deeper we penetrate into the basis of the symptoms; the inadequacy of it in the case here described will presently be made evident. Closer investigation into the nature of the pathogenic mental processes demonstrates that there is always a very precise reason why they have become split off, or "disaggregated"; the defect in assimilation of these processes is due namely to the incompatibility of them with the main body of the personality. The patient cannot reconcile them with the rest of his mind because they are to him painful or unpleasant. He automatically strives to forget them, to submerge them, or, as it is technically called, to "repress" them (*Verdrängen*.)

From this point of view it is plain that every hysterical symptom essentially rests on a pathological amnesia, though in most cases not only the nature, but the very existence of the amnesia, is unknown both to the patient and to the physician. In some cases, as in the present one, the amnesia does not become converted into a symptom, but remains as such, and is manifest to all. This latter condition is not so simple, however, as might be supposed from these remarks, for the amnesia which is obvious, and which can usually be overcome by very simple measures, is a secondary phenomenon, being dependent on a deeper mental process, which has been still more profoundly forgotten. Even when we have reached this second group of mental processes it is only to find that it in its turn has been "repressed" and forgotten because of the action of a still deeper group, which is itself similarly conditioned. An hysterical symptom is thus seen to be built up by an