

Guest Editorial:

The Organic Aspects of Forensic Psychiatry

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This issue of the *Bulletin* contains several papers presented at the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Academy, including those with an organic thrust. All authors are to be congratulated, particularly Charles M. Poser, M.D., whose paper was selected for repeat presentation at the one hundred and thirty-second Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association.

The interface areas between psychiatry and the law are continually clarifying with time and experience, just as are those between general medicine and the specialty of psychiatry. Psychiatry is the logical interface between medicine and the behavioral and social sciences, and law can be thought of as a type of behavioral science, as its existence and evolution are directed toward the regulation of man's behavior and the proper facilitation of man's emotional expression. Such behavior may be related to direct interpersonal dealings, such as the keeping of contractual agreements, transgression of ego boundaries, and transgression of territoriality, or the less direct dealings inherent in embezzlement, property inheritance, libel, or discrimination. Trial by ordeal, duels, and face-offs at high noon have mainly given way to legal proceedings. This change surely can be viewed as an improvement even by those who think society is becoming too litigious. However, as people's considerations and expectations become more sophisticated, and at times too simple-mindedly demanding, the need arises for more effective understanding of the brain's relationships regarding its external and internal environments, memories, plans and pursuits.

In this issue several papers relate to the more physical side of the brain's life: neurological disease, physical trauma, amnesia, head and neck injuries, and bio-psycho-social sexual maturation; within these papers weave the threads of legal proceedings to achieve conflict resolution, compensation, social justice, and the pursuit of happiness. Other papers relate to the more psychic and abstract side of the brain's life: guardianship, running amok, homicide, constitutional rights, treatment, and teaching; we see in these papers aspects of man's efforts to cope with and to regulate his rights, reactions, and expressions of impulses by himself and fellow men. Teaching, of course, is one of the greatest methods man has for furthering the brain's growth and mankind's evolutionary progress; teaching about the interface

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area of psychiatry and law should further this growth. Let us all hope that it does.

In closing, I should like to thank all the officers and friends of the academy; special appreciation is hereby expressed to Herbert E. Thomas, M.D., Editor of the Bulletin, to the Associate Editors who also reviewed these papers, to the Bulletin Staff, and to each and every one of the authors who have contributed.