

EVIDENCIAS TESTIMONIALES.

IN MEMORIAM - SANDOR FERENCZI, M.D. 1873-1933.



Sandor Radó

On May the twenty-second of this year, shortly before his sixtieth birthday, Sandor Ferenczi of Budapest died of pernicious anemia. In him psychoanalysis loses one of its most successful pioneers and brilliant proponents. He was a man of warmth and distinction, a kindly physician, a fascinating teacher, and preeminently a tireless thinker and student. His writings, which are characterized by great originality and richness in ideas, have been translated into many languages, and have carried his name far beyond the immediate field of his labors. The importance of his achievements and the nobility of his character attracted to him students of all nationalities. All those who were privileged to be among his friends or fellow-workers, even though he has left them, will continue to be bound to him in affection and admiration. His contributions to psychoanalysis fill several volumes and remain a permanent possession of our science. In the International Psychoanalytic Association, which was founded through his efforts in 1910, he occupied the post of President (1918-19), and that of Vice-President since 1927. For the last twenty years he has been leader of the Hungarian Psychoanalytic Society, which he founded; and he was a founder and coeditor of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*.

Our international congresses gave all the members of our body the opportunity of a personal acquaintance with Dr. Ferenczi. He was never absent from any of these congresses, and his paper was always a real event. In 1926 for a period of eight months only he left his Budapest home for a stay in New York. Here he held a series of popular lectures on psychoanalysis at the New School for Social Research, and numerous scientific lectures before psychiatric societies and at psychiatric institutions. His paper on Gulliver Patsies, read at the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry, gave American hearers a first-hand opportunity to appreciate him as the subtle interpreter of a literary genius.

Dr. Ferenczi was born in the small Hungarian city of Miskolcz in 1873. He obtained his medical education during the nineties at the University of Vienna, where the medical school was then at the high, of its reputation. He applied himself to the study of neurology and psychiatry, entered practice at Budapest, and shortly thereafter published several brief clinical observations in this field. Early in his practice he worked with great energy as psychiatric expert to the Royal Court of Justice in Budapest. His first psychoanalytic contribution *Actual- and Psychoneuroses* was published in 1908, shortly after he had become acquainted with psychoanalysis and had come in contact with Freud. In 1909 he published *Introjection and Transference*, containing an analytic theory of hypnosis, which, even today, twenty-five years after, is still valid. There soon followed observations on disturbances in male potency, on the problem of paranoia, on obscene words, his discovery of transient symptoms which arise during an analysis, his study of the stages of development of the sense of reality, and after these an almost uninterrupted current of longer or shorter publications which touched every branch of psychoanalytic endeavor and every topic, and which contained not merely confirmations of and additions to that which was known and new observations and findings, but also an inexhaustibly abundant stimulation to further research. The psychopathology of everyday life, the interpretation of dreams, the theory of the neuroses in general and of the specific neuroses, as well as problems in applied psychoanalysis, were repeatedly made the subjects of his invaluable articles. All analysts are familiar with his profound studies on hysteria and the pathoneuroses, and with his persistent continued experiments with an active analytic technique. Besides his scientific articles, of which there are

several hundred, Ferenczi was always able to devote time and effort to the popular presentation in lectures and articles of the fundamental problems and newer contributions of psychoanalysis. Freud, in the article written on the occasion of Ferenczi's fiftieth birthday, characterized a collection of these popular articles as "the best introduction to psychoanalysis for those who know little of the field". Ferenczi was also among the first in the attempt to bring psychoanalysis into closer relations with sociology and jurisprudence.

Ferenczi's masterpiece, which he too regarded as a sort of quintessence of his scientific life-work, is his *Versuch einer Genitaltheorie*, published in 1924—a book, which like an enlarged portrait reflects its author's scientific splendor, his ingenuity and intuition, the breath-taking flight of his constructive imagination, his indefatigable onward advance into untouched fields of research, and the combination of all these qualities with the gift for extremely careful observation in psychoanalytic work. This is not the occasion for an appraisal of this book, which is unique—not only in psychoanalysis. Ferenczi's effort is to reconstruct from psychological observations and data a phylogenetic theory of the human genital organization and thus—on Lamarckian principles—at an unsuspected position bridge the gap between psychoanalysis and biology. Ferenczi himself called this approach, bioanalysis. Even with all due reservation, it may be said that the full significance of Ferenczi's theory of genitality has not been appreciated either by psychoanalysts or biologists. It remains as a challenge to the science of the future. An English translation will shortly appear in this *QUARTERLY*.

In contrast, the effect of Ferenczi's clinical contributions has been great and permanent. A psychoanalyst, no matter which field he is studying, cannot deal with his problem seriously without encountering, even at his first approach to it, important observations, clues and premonitions in the works of Ferenczi. From Ferenczi's writings generations of young psychoanalysts will continue to derive guidance, stimulation and instruction. His work will live on among these younger men and women who will ever willingly acknowledge their indebtedness to his affection and to his love of service.

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