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PRELUDES TO INSANITY.*

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It is gratifying to know that in this age of modern scientific methods the interesting field of psychology has not been neglected. Insanity in its various forms and phases is no longer studied and classified from the symptomatic phenomena it presents but rather from a physiological and pathological basis. It is along this line that our hope for future development in psychiatry must lie. Much of the obscurity in the pathogenesis of nervous, and especially of mental diseases, is largely to be explained by the simple fact that the brain and the nervous system have been studied, altogether too much, as something apart from the other portions of the body—as something beyond the jurisdiction of the great fundamental pathological processes which operate on the whole organism. The mists of prejudice and empiricism are slowly lifting before the sunlight of modern research, carried on by investigators into the etiology of insanity. They are gradually removing the obstacles that have so long paralyzed the development of mental medicine and are demonstrating conclusively that the study of psychology must be conducted along the same lines as pursued in the investigations of other branches of medicine. While we recognize that heredity is the great predisposing cause of insanity, the physical aspect of mental disease must never be lost sight of. The study of the sympathetic relations between functional and organic disorders of the body and mental disturbances, has only

* Read before the Ontario Medical Association, June, 1905.