

justify surgical interference as soon as the collapse has passed off. As in perforative or gangrenous appendicitis an early evacuation of the septic matter is necessary, so in this affection an early exploration from the front is demanded. The subacute and chronic cases of pancreatitis call for surgical intervention to evacuate the pus and relieve the distention.

ACUTE INSANITY.

Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.

In nothing is the truth of the above saying better borne out than in the study of medical opinion regarding acute insanity. The time was when the maniac was regarded as under the spell of some evil spirit; the disease was looked upon as of supernatural origin.

Slowly the truth began to dawn upon the medical horizon that acute insanity was a disease of the mind. But what was the mind? For answer to this question one might just as well go ask the winds as look up the pages of works treating of mental diseases and insanity.

But there came a further advance, when it was held that acute insanity, like all forms of insanity, was due to disease of the brain. The brain had now come to be regarded as the organ of the mind. Disease of the brain therefore caused derangement in the thought, language and conduct of the person. What the disease of the brain was that underlay these outbursts of acute insanity had not been defined, nor could it in the condition of medical science at the period when Esquirol, Pinel and Pritchard did their great work.

Gradually light came over this portion of medical research, as has been the case in so many other fields of scientific investigation. The important studies of Bouchard on auto-intoxication from the alimentary tract; the work of Horsley on the thyroid gland; of Ord, on myxedema; of Klippel, on the relationship of hepatic disorders and mental disorders—all go to show that toxins in the system must be regarded as the cause of acute insanity. Every clinician is familiar with the deliria of the acute infections.

Of the toxic agents that cause insanity the following may be