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ON THE COMMONER TYPES OF FUNCTIONAL CARDIAC MURMURS*

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The question as to the significance of cardiac murmurs is often one of the gravest which is brought before the physician—and the surgeon. Examiners for insurance companies, medical boards of the army and navy, school physicians, surgeons on the eve of an operation meet daily with individuals in whom there are detected cardiac murmurs of varying character, unassociated with evidences of functional disturbances. And if, in the course of the examination, the patient gains knowledge that he has a cardiac murmur, the question as to its nature and significance is often referred to one or more colleagues of the original examiner. The experienced clinician, meeting with many such cases, learns soon to pass almost unconsciously over the commoner and more obviously unimportant of these murmurs, making, perhaps, no comment on them even in his private records, and is genuinely surprised to find that his younger and less experienced colleague is unfamiliar with that which to him is too obvious to mention. He forgets that it is only long clinical experience that brings confidence in such matters, and that, under the imperfect methods of clinical instruction which have prevailed in the past, and unfortunately still prevail to a considerable extent in America to-day, a large proportion of physicians enter their profession with a very limited practical experience.

*Read before Academy of Medicine.