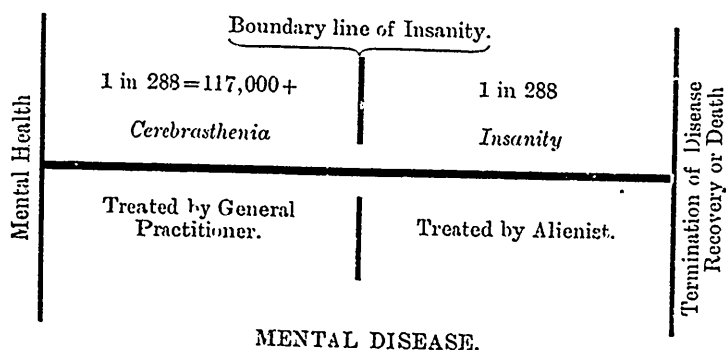


THE PREVENTION OF INSANITY.*

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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen.—The prevention of insanity is so important a question at the present time, when insanity is so rapidly on the increase, that any contribution to its study, however slight, must meet with the consideration of the entire medical profession.

In a recent paper by Dr. Robert Jones, Superintendent of the London County Asylum of Claybury, he states that on January 1st, 1904, 1 in every 288 of the entire population of England and Wales were certified as insane. Startling as these figures are it is not to them but to a subsequent remark in his paper that I would like to direct your attention, viz., that, "We also know that possibly the same number are on the borderland of certification and are being daily precipitated into the asylums." This means that 1 in 288, or a total of 117,199 persons are daily crossing the boundary line and contributing to increase the number of insane in the above-mentioned countries.



How are these 117,000 persons who are on the borderland being treated? Clearly not by alienists, since they have not yet crossed the boundary line and been certified to as insane. Hence, the only treatment they can receive, if they receive any, must be by the general practitioner. But what preparation has the general practitioner received in order to treat these patients? The answer to this is, I believe, the crux of the whole question.

*Read before the first meeting of the Medical Superintendents of the Asylums of Ontario, Sept. 20th, 1905.