

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

PSCYHOSES AND NEUROSES OF UROGENITAL ORIGIN.*

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MALADIES of a neurasthenic and psychic nature bordering on the brink of insanity and mental aberrations of minor import, are apt to follow in the wake of diseases of the genito-urinary tract, especially those of the urethra and its adnexa. It is incredible with what persistency the mind of a patient will dwell on pre-existing affections even if all traces of them have been satisfactorily eradicated. That class of patients is apt to become a burden, not alone to themselves, but a positive annoyance to the physician as well, who after repeated and painstaking examinations becomes convinced that there is nothing of any pathological significance in the entire urogenital apparatus, and thus accordingly acquaints the patient of the fact and endeavours to remove his morbid conception. To his dismay, he will, however, discover that there is something very grave in the urogenital sphere. No manner of persuasion and reasoning will avail under these circumstances to dispel his illusion; the patient will run the gamut of a number of physicians, until either some charlatan by divers surreptitious means will actually alleviate him of his fancy or suggestive affliction, or else time alone will effect a cure.

It would be very interesting to learn the underlying etiological factors that give rise to this type of nervous manifestations coincident to the diseases of the male genitalia. Various theories have been advanced. One of these goes so far as to ascribe the neurastheniacal symptoms to the absorption of a toxin from the urethra, which, acting upon the nerve centres, is capable of creating a host of manifestations of a nervous or psychic character. Another of the theories propounded contends that unless a predisposing tendency to unbalanced mentality or a highly nervous temperament exists, such sequelæ are not prone to develop; the presence of a urethritis or some other venereal malady at some time, merely acting as the exciting or determining factor. The latter seems to be the more plausible of the two theories, a feeble, nervous mechanism and perverted volition are wholly responsible for these morbidities in the mental sphere.

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