

work is done in a hospital for the insane, it must not be regarded as authoritative, for the asylum physician has little opportunity of learning about the earlier manifestations of insanity, which necessarily come under the observation of the general practitioner. As a matter of fact, we of the psychiatric specialty, after a long period of observance of our medical brethren who exploit other lines, have concluded that it is time that we, too, assumed the convenient expedient of poking the responsibility for our ignorance upon some other branch of the profession, and the special reason for bringing my paper into being is to secure an opportunity to call the attention of the family doctor to the splendid opportunity he has of contributing towards our enlightenment by thorough study of early symptoms and careful estimate of their relative importance. The majority of patients coming to institutions for the insane are incapable of giving a reliable account of the development of their disorders, and the asylum physicians must necessarily depend almost entirely upon the histories which accompany patients. The meagreness of such histories frequently bears testimony, of the silent yet eloquent sort, to lack of interest in mental cases on the part of many physicians in general practice. Yet it is generally conceded that no other illness compares in fatefulness with mental disease; there is none which causes greater distress to friends; none more dreaded, or from which recovery is more devoutly to be wished for; and none which more intimately touches individual, family and nation, or which is of greater import from sociologic or economic viewpoints.

When with these facts we have also to consider that insanity is rapidly increasing in civilized countries, and that it is a condition which is often arrested in its incipency, we have surely a sufficient combination of reasons why the general practitioner should regard mental disease as of no less importance than other conditions which he is called upon to treat, and should lead him to a careful study of mental abnormalities.

It is rather a peculiar circumstance that the majority of physicians are especially interested in the one form of mental disease from which there can be no recovery—general paresis. It is very desirable that an early diagnosis should be made in this disease, because of the fact that it often manifests itself in a profligacy which may bring financial ruin to patient and family, or in a moral lapse which may lead to unfortunate legal complications, and cause great mortification to friends.