

be pardoned if they infer that very little is known regarding the causes and treatment of insanity and consequently conclude that the commitment of patients to hospitals for the insane is indicated only when all other methods of treatment have been tried and proved to be of no avail. As a result of this unfortunate belief, many cases of mental disorder, which might have been cured had they been dealt with in a hospital at the onset of the attack, are left without proper treatment until they have become hopelessly chronic.

Physicians as a rule do not willingly admit that metaphysics has influenced the practice of medicine. Nevertheless, the present defect, in the organization of our hospitals for the insane, is a concrete example of the potency of the belief, once generally entertained, to the effect that the ills to which the *materia cogitans non extensa* was heir, were too intangible to admit of any successful therapy. A strict adherence to the letter of the Cartesian philosophy would doubtless relieve the alienist of responsibility so far as many cases coming under his observation are concerned. It is fortunate, however, that there is to be found an increasing number of those who believe that, in all cases of insanity, there is an organic lesion situated, sometimes above, but quite as often, below the diaphragm. Even a slight degree of familiarity with the psychological reactions, produced by "calomy and laudamy," or with brimstone and molasses, should be sufficient to demonstrate the impossibility of always distinguishing clearly between the *materia cogitans non extensa* and the *materia extensa non cogitans*.

Improvement in the medical care of the insane, as well as hope of progress in the study of psychiatry, depends primarily upon the adoption by the managers of our hospitals for the insane of a system which shall make it possible for the medical officers in these institutions to devote themselves solely to their professional duties. Let us consider briefly how these ends may be attained. The most efficient and capable medical officers can only be found in those institutions in which the methods of organization are similar to those employed in the best general hospital. It must not be understood that I am advocating the introduction at present of such methods into all institutions devoted to the care of the insane. Reference is made solely to those which have assumed the name of hospital. The term asylum is generally assigned to the institutions which are given up solely to the care of the more chronic forms of alienation. The hospitals for the insane are of two classes. First, there is the type of hospital best represented by the German Psychiatric Clinic and of which we unfortunately have no counterpart on this side of the Atlantic. Secondly, generally in or near a large city