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ON THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EARLY RECOGNITION OF LOCOMOTOR ATAXIA.—DO THE EYE SYMPTOMS ASSIST US?*

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As physicians, we all wish to recognize, at the earliest possible moment, any disease which we may be called upon to treat. But in the case of locomotor ataxia—tabes dorsalis—it is of particular, I might almost say of supreme, importance, to make an early diagnosis. Is there any special reason for making such a statement? I answer yes, because the earlier this disease can be brought under treatment, the more hope there is of success.

Some, however, would object to the term "success" as applied to the treatment of tabes. Practically, they hold treatment to be useless, except in so far as palliating the symptoms is concerned. If this be true, if treatment is useless, then it makes little difference how early or how late we recognize the disease. If we can but palliate some of the symptoms, such, for instance, as the lightning pains, we may wait until these appear, and allow the pathological process to progress until inco-ordination has so developed as to render the man a useless member of society. But this disease is not the hopeless one it is often supposed to be. The trend of modern medical thought is to consider the treatment of locomotor ataxia as hopeful, at least in its earlier stages.

As we are all aware, tabes dorsalis has three stages. 1st. Pre-ataxic, or the stage before the staggering gait comes on. 2nd.

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